



**Voice of the interests of  
small business in the EU**

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11 June 2017

Bologna / G7 side event "Firms for sustainable development"



- EU SME umbrella organization and EU social partner
- 64 national and EU based member organizations with 12 million companies and 55 million employees in Europe

# SMEs in the EU



- 23 million companies in EU
- 99,8% are SMEs
- SMEs produce 60% of the EU GDP and 2/3 jobs
- SMEs engine for growth, jobs and welfare in the EU
- That is why they need an SME-friendly framework

# EU firms & environmental assessment instruments



- The different environmental assessment instruments - whether based on standards or on legislation - can produce an added value, if they are kept free from mandatory elements and red tape as far as possible.
- Synergies - rather than overlapping obligations - between these instruments, for example between EMAS and ISO standards and EIA should be extended in the future.
- Impact Assessments must especially analyse the effects of regulatory action on SMEs.

# EU firms & environmental assessment instruments



- If environmental assessment instruments are very bureaucratic, they are not much accepted by businesses, as for example EMAS.
- Companies perceive environmental assessment instruments of added value and make use of them, if they are voluntary, unbureaucratic and flexible.

# International sustainability and environmental information standards



- Businesses accept sustainability and environmental information standards on a voluntary basis. The way of implementation of CSR as well as the broadness of the CSR-approach (Ecological and or social) can vary greatly.
- International standards are beneficial as they guarantee comparability and can support companies in their efforts to promote sustainability. They establish a frame of orientation for companies when taking entrepreneurial decisions.

# International sustainability and environmental information standards



- Currently worrying trend towards juridification: a growing number of companies is obliged to shoulder social responsibility, especially SMEs are under pressure through the supply chain.
- By no means should standards become mandatory, as it would destroy the above-described uniqueness of ideas and the dedication shown by individual companies. Imposing a one-fits-all solution would ruin all innovation capacity.
- Voluntary international standards would be positive for European companies, but no new obligations!

Thank you



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