Resolution on steps towards improving the environment for SMEs in Europe - Small Business Act

2008/2669(RSP) - 04/12/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 3 December 2008, the European Parliament adopted by 614 votes to 11 with 9 abstentions a resolution on steps towards improving the environment for SMEs in Europe – Small Business Act (SBA) in response to the Commission's Communication on this subject. The resolution had been tabled for consideration in plenary by the EPP-ED, and PES groups.

Noting that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are crucial to Europe's economy, providing over 100 000 000 jobs, Parliament calls on Member States to confirm that they intend formally to approve the SBA at the Brussels European Council in December 2008 in order to ensure the necessary high visibility. The Council is asked to make the provisions binding, in order for it to have a significant and positive effect on the environment for SMEs.

Members emphasise the need for Member States fully to support the implementation of the provisions of the SBAs in order for them to be effective. They calls for concrete measures to be taken at both Member State and regional level, to complement the measures adopted at Community level. Member States are asked, therefore, to announce how and within what timeframe the provisions of the SBA will be incorporated into the national regulatory frameworks.

Parliament recalls that, in order to ensure that the provisions of the SBA are effective, a screening system should be set up to monitor its progress and its implementation by the Commission and the Member States. The progress made in the implementation of the provisions of the SBA must be included in a stand-alone chapter in the annual reports on the Lisbon Strategy national reform programmes.

Lastly, the resolution calls on the Commission and Member States not to forget the 'real economy' when tackling the current financial crisis. Concrete support for SMEs should be provided by ensuring their access to finance in this critical moment. In this respect, Parliament welcomes the new package of the European Investment Bank envisaging EUR 30 000 000 000 for SME loans as agreed by the Council, but takes the view that the amount will not be sufficient to solve the current problems of SME financing.