

Programme for the competitiveness of enterprises and SMEs, COSME 2014-2020

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The Council reached an agreement on the essential elements of the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs programme (the "COSME programme") for the years 2014-2020.

The agreement paves the way for the start of negotiations on the programme with the European Parliament with a view to its timely adoption.

All delegations stressed the importance of the programme in contributing to the easing of credit crunch conditions for European business caused by the economic crisis. Facilitation of access to finance should be accompanied by an efficient regulatory environment.

They agreed on the **principles** of achieving simplified procedures and the need to avoid an unnecessary administrative burden when implementing the provisions of the programme.

A few delegations also emphasised the role of the tourism sector in the programme. Some delegations referred to the advisability of reinforcing the "Enterprise Europe Network" as a means of promoting the competitiveness of SMEs within the internal market and beyond the EU.

The coherence between COSME and other EU programmes and instruments was also mentioned.

Under the agreement, the financial instruments of the programme, which will include an equity facility and a loan guarantee facility, will be employed with a view to facilitating access to finance for SMEs in their start-up, growth and transfer phases. The Commission will develop a set of **key performance indicators** designed to assess the extent to which the objectives of the measures supported under the COSME programme have been achieved.

It should be noted that the COREPER on 16 May 2012 examined the Presidency compromise proposal and managed to solve most of the remaining outstanding issues. However, there are still some concerns on the following items :

Annual work programmes:

- on Article 13.1 (e), which mention the percentage per year which could be allocated to Loan Guarantee Facility above € 150.000, DE, NL and SI would like the deletion of the paragraph;
- on Article 13.1 (f), on financial instruments, DE and NL would like the deletion of the words " e.g. guarantee cap".

The Commission fully reserves its position on the entire compromise proposal. Its reservation pertains in particular to the introduction of a no-opinion-clause (Article 19) and to the changes introduced to the Loan Guarantee Facility (Article 17.11).

Budget: the proposed budget for implementing the programme during the 7-year period amounts to EUR 2.5 billion. The final budget for COSME will be decided in the context of the overall EU budget for the next cycle of financial perspectives.