

Green growth opportunities for SMEs

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The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted the own-initiative report by Philippe DE BACKER (ADLE, BE) on green growth opportunities for SMEs the Commission Communication entitled ‘Green Action Plan For SMEs’.

Members **supported the concept of green growth** and circular economy should be part of a wider strategy of promoting job creation and economic growth among SMEs. They called on the Commission to **establish a comprehensive policy framework, including concrete policy objectives** and better integrating and streamlining existing policy tools to ensure opportunities and participation of SMEs in the green and circular economy.

Financing of green initiatives: Members stressed that apart from venture capital, **private investment and credit unions** should be assessed more clearly as alternative financing to classic bank loans. Potential financing opportunities should be explored through the [European Fund for Strategic Investments](#).

Stressing that there was no one-size-fits-all mode of finance, Members called on the Commission to **take into account the interests of SMEs in all existing and possible future programmes**, instruments and initiatives, especially for new business models in the green economy, ranging across equity, quasi-equity and debt instruments, and partnerships between banks and other operators involved in SME financing in order to support businesses in their start-up, growth and transfer phases.

The Commission and the EIB were asked to make sure that in the implementation phase of the ‘[Investment Plan for Europe](#)’ SMEs, including green and innovative ones, would be key beneficiaries of the support provided for under this proposal.

Furthermore, entrepreneurs, SMEs, business associations and support organisations should be more **literate on financing possibilities** for more performing technologies, or for contracting services such as consultancy, coaching and training on eco-design, and availability of green technologies, products and services that could be beneficial for their business

Knowledge management: the report stressed the importance of **knowledge transfers** and multi-stakeholder knowledge sharing, including cross-border, through informal networks, especially for SMEs and microenterprises to **raise awareness of existing and new innovative techniques**, best practices, ways to acquire proper financing, possible government support schemes and the relevant legislative frameworks entailing the least burdensome administration

Members supported the organisation of a **European Resource Efficiency Campaign** to inform SMEs about the benefits and opportunities offered by resource efficiency and how industrial synergies on recycling could be created.

Research, development and innovation, and skills: the report stressed the need to be more effective in developing basic R&D, to fully involve SMEs in this process and to actively support further transformation of basic R&D outcomes into further technological advances for an improved policy framework for the circular economy. Members called for:

- a **more stable regulatory framework and adequate financial schemes** in order to enable economic initiative and entrepreneurship and to limit the time to market of new products, services and business practices, notably in the green economy;

- promoting the use by SMEs of data derived from European space infrastructures in business nurseries and incubators;
- including as part of the Circular Economy Package the **extension of the eco-design instrument** to include the resource efficiency dimension. Eco-design should address durability, reparability and recyclability of products, including standards for guaranteed minimum lifetime and disassembly.

(De)regulation as an engine for growth: the report called on Member States to avoid creating barriers to the internal market by gold-plating, to review their current regulatory regimes, to remove any superfluous or ineffective regulations which constitute market barriers, and to ensure consistent transposition into national legislation.

The Commission was asked to:

- **refrain from legislative proposals that would lead to an unnecessary administrative burden for businesses** and SMEs and to continuously review existing legislation with the objective of decreasing the current administrative burden;
- **draw up common guidelines** for national public support schemes for green investment projects in order to create a more uniform set of measures.

Miscellaneous support measures: the report several other important challenges, including:

- developing entrepreneurship skills, which should be included in basic and higher education systems, and also be promoted through extra-curricular activities and lifelong learning;
- helping microenterprises and start-ups in moving towards sustainable green growth;
- addressing unsustainable consumption patterns and promoting a change in consumer behaviour;
- speeding up pending trade agreements with our partners so as to facilitate European SMEs' access to new markets;
- fostering female entrepreneurship;
- identifying the sectors of European industry and geographical areas where the conditions are met for the creation of new clusters and hubs.