European observatory for SMEs. 2nd annual report 1994

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This communication contains the Commission's comments on the second annual report by the European Observatory for SMEs, the objective of which is to provide an overall analysis of the impact of the single market on SMEs (main trends, general situation of SMEs and craft industries in the EU, job creation and human resources, capital and finances, innovation and research). Generally speaking, the Commission welcomes the fact that the report confirms what the "Growth, competitiveness, employment" White Paper had highlighted, i.e. that strengthening the competitiveness of enterprises - and first and foremost SMEs, which represent 99% of the 15.8 million enterprises in the private sector in the EU and create 72% of the jobs - is one of the main ways of stimulating economic growth and job creation in Europe. The Commission is in favour of the recommendations in the report which highlight employment and the role of SMEs in reducing unemployment and the numerous recommendations on promoting exchanges of information and experiences between the Member States on national initiatives under way, which now form part of the integrated programme for SMEs and craft industries. Other recommendations, such as developing a European programme to promote entrepreneurship, could be examined during the implementation of the integrated programme. As for the future work of the Observatory, it should focus more on monitoring the participation of SMEs in the internal market and the format of future reports should therefore be changed so as to reflect the results of this monitoring. The Commission considers that the Observatory should constitute one of the main sources of analysis when drawing up practical proposals for effectively implementing the internal market for SMEs.