



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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INFORMATION NOTE

From: European Commission

To: Council

Subject: Competitiveness Council on 10 March 2011

– AOB.j) Mid-term review of the Small Business Act

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Commission on the above-mentioned subject.

Information Note
Review of the “Small Business Act” for Europe

The European Commission adopted the Communication “Review of the “Small Business Act” for Europe” on 23 February 2011. In its Communication, the Commission takes stock of the progress achieved in implementing the “Small Business Act” for Europe (SBA) and proposes a set of concrete future actions to be implemented by the Commission and Member States.

In the Communication, the European Commission focuses on the key priority areas identified by the Member States:

1. Smart Regulation

The full implementation of the “Think Small First” principle of the SBA remains the core principle in the European and national policy making process. The proposed initiatives aim amongst others to simplify the business environment, promote the use of a specific SME test in impact assessment procedures and make public administrations more responsive to SMEs' needs.

2. Access to finance

Among the proposed actions are: reinforcing and streamlining financial instruments, promoting venture capital and making funding programmes more accessible to SMEs.

3. Access to markets

The Commission and Member States are invited to take measures to improve SMEs' access to the Single Market, and to help SMEs face globalised markets and to contribute to a resource-efficient economy.

4. Entrepreneurship

It is necessary to stimulate entrepreneurship by removing the barriers for entrepreneurs to bring ideas to market. Introducing mentoring schemes, identifying best practices for business transfers, and reducing the time and costs for start-ups are among the measures which can improve the business environment for SMEs.

To ensure the implementation of these actions, the Commission and Member States need to strengthen the SBA's governance through a strong partnership. In this regard, an SBA Advisory Group will be set up by bringing together representatives of governments and business organisations. Member States are therefore invited to nominate their national SME Envoy following the example of the Commission.
