



Stakeholders urge EU institutions to support the “Third Industrial Revolution”

On 1 February 2011, the Environment Committee of the European Parliament, chaired by Jo Leinen MEP, and representatives of the five major political groups in the EP joined with Europe’s main associations representing small and medium-sized companies (UEAPME), consumers’ interests (BEUC), cooperatives (Cooperatives Europe) and the Foundation on Economic Trends in a call for a “Third Industrial Revolution” ahead of the European Council’s summit devoted to energy.

The European Parliament will forward a declaration to Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, and José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, requesting a comprehensive legislative plan with adequate means to implement the “Third Industrial Revolution” energy strategy across Member States.

The European associations represent the vast majority of businesses as well as the most representative consumer organisations in Europe.

Representatives of the involved associations commented:

“The Third Industrial Revolution will only become a reality if the convergence between energy and new communication technologies is taken on board by consumers, SMEs, cooperatives and trade unions. To this end, it is essential to engage consumers and end-users in the design and implementation of the technologies, in order for them to be available, affordable, and accessible for all. This notably implies taking account of major features of consumer behaviour while preventing any infringement to their right of privacy”, said **Monique Goyens**, Director General of **BEUC**, the European consumers’ organisation.

“This new coalition of European trade associations, representing millions of small and medium size enterprises and hundreds of millions of consumers and workers, is a new force with far reaching potential to fundamentally change the political landscape, creating a new economic paradigm and game plan for the next stage of European integration. Chancellor Angela Merkel, President José Luis Zapatero as well as British Prime Minister David Cameron are already planning and implementing the various components of the five pillar infrastructure of the ‘Third Industrial Revolution’. The European Parliament and Europe’s leading trade associations expect the European Council to take immediate actions, consistent with this vision, to empower Europe’s businesses, consumers, workers and citizens to begin the transition towards a post-carbon economy”, said Professor **Jeremy Rifkin**, president of the **Foundation on Economic Trends**.

“The ‘Third Industrial Revolution’ is an extraordinary opportunity for our society at large and for small and medium-sized companies in particular. SMEs will benefit from this revolution as users, installers, creators of new technologies, advisers on energy efficiency and micro-generators of renewable energy. The current economic and climate crises will make it compulsory to switch to this new system, which must be promoted at local, national but also at European level. All the EU programmes must be redesigned to make the ‘Third Industrial Revolution’ a reality”, said **Andrea Benassi**, Secretary General of **UEAPME**, the European craft and SME employers’ organisation.



“Co-operative enterprises are an off-spring of the first industrial revolution. By empowering their members through economic participation and a democratic business control system they contribute towards building a more equitable and people-centred economy. The third industrial revolution is in line with these basic principles, which aims to create a more resilient and sustainable energy market for all citizens of Europe. Everyone can and should benefit from these new technologies by actively participating in their co-creation, co-production and co-diffusion”, said **Klaus Niederländer**, Director of **Cooperatives Europe**, the European association of co-operative enterprises.

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