



“The Voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UEAPME: Economic governance and SMEs must also become Convention’s focus

Brussels, November 6th, 2002. UEAPME, Europe’s SME’s employers’ association, calls on the Convention to give a stronger emphasis on economic policy, internal market and economic governance and asks for the recognition of the importance of SMEs in Europe as a key feature in the new treaty. “The EU Convention should not restrict itself to dealing with sophisticated institutional issues, it should also concentrate on making the EU work and in that perspective it must resolve the on-going blockages on economic issues at EU level” **Hans Werner Mueller**, UEAPME’s Secretary General, said today.

In that perspective the Convention must go from a simple rhetorical acknowledgment of SMEs importance to a concrete one in which SMEs bear a fair share of EU regulations. An important step towards this goal would be achieved by granting a legal status to the European Charter for Small Enterprises through the inclusion of the essence of the Charter in the new treaty. UEAPME argues that the Lisbon targets can only be achieved if the treaty improves the quality of economic governance. The best possible environment for businesses and enterprises must be the target.

UEAPME therefore asks the Convention to review the current consultation procedure, which at present often goes to the disadvantage of businesses. “Open consultation is important but only representative organisations that are able to take responsibility for the outcome of their proposals can guarantee regulations that are supportive to all target groups” Mueller concluded.

UEAPME acknowledges the Convention initiative to incorporate the Fundamental Rights Charter in the new treaty but argues that amendments have to be made in the Charter before it becomes legally binding. The Charter must be implemented in a way in which it does not conflict with other main principles of the EC and does not create unwanted problems for small business, which employ more than half of European workers.

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