



“The Voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UEAPME to elect new president

Bonetti: “I am proud of UEAPME’s success during these last years”

Brussels, November 13th, 2002. UEAPME, the association of SMEs employers in Europe, will elect a new President and a new Board of Directors in its Administrative Council meeting and General Assembly that take place today and tomorrow. **Hans Werner Mueller’s** request for a second mandate as UEAPME’s Secretary General will also be in the agenda of the meetings.

The new president will take the spot of **Mr. Andrea Bonetti** who has been UEAPME’s president since 1999. Mr. Bonetti’s presidency was characterised by major successes on the internal and external scene. Amongst his important “external” achievements Mr Bonetti ranks the implementation of the agreement with UNICE on the European Social Dialogue as the most important one. “To be included in the Social Dialogue is essential. I have noticed during these years that what really makes the difference between organisations that count and others that don’t is the participation in the social dialogue. Either you are in or you are out and there is no middle point”, Bonetti argued in his farewell speech today. According to him, UEAPME has benefited in many ways from this participation. Not only has it allowed the organisation to become more renowned but it also enabled UEAPME representatives to be present in meetings where “the essence of things are discussed” Bonetti added. Taking part in meetings with the European Troika and the Macro Economic Dialogue has permitted UEAPME to better represent the interests of SMEs in the EU. Another key achievement during his presidency was the improvement of the relationship with ETUC, which culminated in UEAPME’s signature of the joint agreement on telework last July.

One of the major deeds on the internal scene was the merger between UEAPME and EUROPMI. This fusion rationalised the representation of SMEs in Europe and increased the credibility of SMEs representation in the eyes of European institutions. Additionally, becoming the only representation of SMEs at European level also helped the organisation to gain more members over the last years. UEAPME now consists of 72 organisations from 34 countries, which represent the interests of more than 10 million SMEs employing more than 50 million people in Europe.

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