



“The Voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Social Dialogue Summit: UEAPME also underlines improvements to be made on Convention and Enlargement

Brussels, November 28th, 2002. On the occasion of the Social Summit held in Genval on Thursday the 28th of November, UEAPME, the European SMEs employer association, presented its main concerns regarding the Social Dialogue within the framework of the European Convention and the Enlargement process.

As regards the European Convention UEAPME’s Secretary General, **Hans Werner Müller**, reiterated his demands for an extension of the scope of the Social Dialogue. “The Social Dialogue must become an instrument that deals with the entire European economy and social policy framework and not only with minimal social standards. It is necessary to launch a broader obligatory consultation procedure for the social partners that encompasses social and economic subjects”, Mr. Müller argued. He also repeated UEAPME’s demand for an inclusion of the Charter for Small Enterprises in the new Treaty in order to officially recognise SME’s role and importance in Europe.

During his intervention Mr. Müller also addressed the progress that have to be done in view of the enlargement process. Amongst his concerns, Müller emphasised the need to support professional organisations from candidate countries. He particularly stressed the necessity to back social partners representing SMEs in order to allow them to participate in the social dialogue at national level on an equal footing with other organisations.

In order to further develop these activities, UEAPME is preparing a second support project for organisations in candidate countries called “Business Support Programme II”. This programme already contains a pillar on the social dialogue. Furthermore, a common pilot project with ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation) on the implementation of the social acquis in SMEs has already started in 4 candidate countries (Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia).

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