



## **“The Voice of SMEs in Europe”**

### **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **SESAME Opening the doors for Small Business**

**Brussels, November 20th, 2002.** In support of European Small and Medium sized Enterprises, Giles Chichester MEP and Conservative Enterprise Europe, hosted SESAME (“Supporting Every Small and Medium-sized Enterprise”) in Brussels, at the beginning of November.

**Garry Parker**, Director of Public Affairs of the Forum of Private Business (FPB) and formerly the FPB Permanent Representative to the European Union, called for closer collaboration between UK SME organisations at a European level. The FPB is the only UK umbrella SME representative within UEAPME, which is Europe’s ‘biggest’ business organisation representing over 10 million small and medium-sized enterprises with nearly 50 million employees.

**Hans Werner Müller**, Secretary General of UEAPME and President of NORMAPME praised the initiative: “I welcome SESAME’s initiative to raise awareness of small business concerns at pan European level. SMEs are a big contributor to job creation, economic growth and prosperity in the European Union. It is crucial that their voice is heard in Brussels”.

Mr Parker explained, “UK SMEs need a strong presence in Brussels to drive lobbying within the European Institutions.” He added that it is fundamental to providing UK small business owners with adequate representation in the policy making process. Following the signing of the Social Chapter, cultural awareness on behalf of UK business has become crucial in influencing European policies. Currently, the FPB and CBI are the only two British organisations to join in Social Dialogue in Europe on the employers’ side.”

John May and Alan Cleverley OBE from the Pan European Genesis Initiative, a pan European Independent think tank were also present. PEGI aims to encourage the development of SMEs by supporting them through research and the writing of policy papers and lobbying the EU Institutions on their behalf through the SME intergroup of the European Parliament and EPP Group SME Union. In a letter to its Chairman, Commissioner Liikanen strongly supported the initiative citing that it will contribute considerably to the goals set out in the Lisbon European Council on growth and sustainability of SMEs, in particular the European Charter for Small Enterprise. Eurochambres and UEAPME fully support PEGI, with Hans Werner Muller as its first Chairman.

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