



“The voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Current trend of European Convention endangers Lisbon Targets

Brussels, 03rd April 2003. UEAPME, the European federation of SME employers, calls for more coherence between the work of the European Convention and the Lisbon Targets. According to the organisation, the present direction of the Convention will not bring the EU closer to reaching the Lisbon Targets. Therefore, if the European Union wants to reach the strategic goal of making Europe the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy in the world by 2010 the current work of the Convention must give a stronger focus to business needs.

UEAPME deplors that so far, the Convention work has given a minor importance to entrepreneurship and the creation of a business friendly environment, two vital elements for a competitive Europe. The SME employers' federation welcomes the prominence given to social and economic welfare in the work of the Convention but regrets that this was done to the detriment of the need for a strong entrepreneurial Europe. “We have the impression that priorities have been misplaced” **Hans Werner Müller**, UEAPME's Secretary General commented, “because social welfare in Europe can only be achieved through a strong economy, and the work of the Convention must go in this direction too.”

Therefore, UEAPME calls on Convention drafters to put entrepreneurship and the Lisbon Targets high on their agenda. During a meeting with Convention drafter Michel Barnier last week UEAPME had the opportunity to present some amendments it would like to see mentioned. Amongst other things, UEAPME strongly supported the idea of including the creation of a best possible environment for business and entrepreneurship in the fundamental principles and objectives of the new treaty.

With regard to Small and Medium Enterprises specifically, UEAPME asked for a general clause in the objectives part of the new treaty mentioning the importance of SMEs in Europe. Additionally, UEAPME called for the inclusion of a clause in the industrial chapter, which explicitly puts forward the idea that the EU will avoid imposing administrative, financial and juridical burdens that could hinder the development of SMEs. Commissioner Barnier committed himself to echoing SME's concerns in the Convention work.

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