



## **“The voice of SMEs in Europe”**

### **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **IGC: European SMEs urge Member States to lay down basis for effective and business friendly EU**

**Brussels, 24th September 2003.** Ahead of the start of the Inter-Governmental Conference in Rome on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, UEAPME, the European SME employers association, calls on Member States to act responsibly in the interest of European economy and citizens when deciding on the new treaty. “The head of states are facing a double task in Rome: ensuring that the new Treaty is feasible and transparent and more importantly guaranteeing that the Institutions of the enlarged EU are able to make decisions without the risk of institutional blockages.” **Hans Werner Müller**, UEAPME’s Secretary General said today.

UEAPME supports many of the proposals made so far in the Convention and warns Member States against yearning for a complete overhaul of what has been achieved. Such a strategy would inevitably result in a total failure of the Conference. But there are elements, which need to be improved if the future EU treaty is to create the right framework for an enlarged EU and its enterprises.

Amongst the components that are still missing in the draft Treaty, UEAPME pleads for an extension of Qualified Majority Voting especially in taxation issues affecting the functioning of the Internal Market. Indeed, the different tax systems in Europe constitute a major burden to the finalisation of the Internal Market and only a harmonisation of certain rules will improve the situation. However, past experiences have shown that the necessary reform process is not achievable with the unanimity-voting rule.

Secondly, UEAPME calls for the inclusion of entrepreneurship in the part of the Union’s objectives in the Treaty. Entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship are of utmost importance for the economic growth, employment and welfare of the European Union, it should therefore be prominently present in the part of the objectives of the Union. The European SME association also argues that the recognition of the importance of SMEs and entrepreneurship should be included in the clauses of general application of the new Treaty.

Finally, UEAPME proposes that small and medium sized undertakings should be independently represented in the Social Dialogue at European level. Recent developments have shown that SMEs have different interests to large companies regarding the content and regulations of the Social Dialogue, therefore it is vital that a body representing Small businesses participates autonomously in the debates.

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