



“The Voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UEAPME says Commission’s SME Envoy has added value to business policy-making

Brussels, October 16th, 2003. Speaking at today’s Expert Meeting on the Environment of Small Business and the Craft Sector organized by the European Commission, **Hans Werner Müller** Secretary General of UEAPME, the European association of crafts and SMEs, praised the benefits the introduction of the SME envoy has brought to business policy making at EU level. “The inclusion of an SME envoy has made business policy making in Brussels sharper and more coherent to the benefit of European small businesses and crafts. We have to make sure that its role is strengthened within the next Commission” Mr. Müller stressed.

Amongst others things, UEAPME’s Secretary General praised the SME envoy’s role in the drafting of the Green Paper on Entrepreneurship, which sets the basis for the creation of a business friendly environment in the EU. Mr. Müller further argued that the Green Paper should become “an indispensable reading for all policy makers at European level that are in charge of areas affecting enterprises.” Defining the Entrepreneurship paper as an extension to the ten action lines included in the Charter for Small Businesses, Mr. Müller highlighted that Member States should finally take action to create an improved business environment.

First and foremost Member States should work towards reducing the increasing administrative burdens. Secondly, measures should be taken which allow and facilitate the continuity of the “traditional” enterprises, which represent around 70% of all European SMEs, especially in the current difficult economic situation. Thirdly, as the closure of the Ford enterprise in Genk has shown, measures for small businesses that are subcontractors of big firms should also be considered. “As usual, national policy-makers tend to forget that twice as much workers and many more entrepreneurs of the subcontracting businesses will suffer heavily from the closure” he said.

Finally, UEAPME’s Secretary General expressed his complete support for the DG Enterprises’ plan to participate more extensively in policy-making areas at EU level that have an effect on businesses and small enterprises in particular, such as taxation and labour market regulations.

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Note to editors: For further information, please contact Luc Hendrickx on tel +32 2 285 0717

Raphael Anspach, Press officer
Tel: +32 2 230 7599/ Fax: +32 2230 7861
Email: pressoffice@ueapme.com
Web: www.ueapme.com/pressroom