



## **“The voice of SMEs in Europe”**

### **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **Industrial Restructuring: UEAPME demands more support measures for SMEs from public authorities**

**Brussels, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2003.** During the conference on industrial restructuring- jointly organised by the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Foundation for the Improvement of living and Working Conditions (Dublin foundation)- held in Brussels today, UEAPME, the European SME employers’ association, has called on public authorities to pay more attention to SMEs in cases of restructuring and industrial changes.

Whilst emphasising that change is an integral part of the life of enterprises and the whole economy, UEAPME is surprised to see that very often the measures, which accompany restructuring, are targeted essentially at large enterprises. It is evident that large enterprises depend on a multitude of subcontracting enterprises in order to operate effectively. “When a large enterprise shuts down in Europe, a whole network of SMEs and the employees of these small structures suffer directly or indirectly” affirmed **Jan Dannenbring**, member of UEAPME’s Social Affairs Committee during the conference.

M. Dannenbring, expert in social affairs in the German national federation of craft trades, recalled that despite their ability to adapt to change, SMEs cannot find solutions to restructuring situations on their own and in most cases end up having to shut down. For this reason, UEAPME is demanding increased support from territorial authorities in cases of restructuring. Amongst the measures to be taken, UEAPME calls for a more active anticipation of industrial change by local and regional authorities. This involves a collective reflection at regional level on what the future will bring as regards market developments, technological innovation, labour market and legislative change.

Finally, UEAPME also supports the establishment of more active partnership between the different regional actors – professional organisations, chambers of crafts, local authorities- in order to bring a multi-faceted assistance to the SMEs affected by restructuring.

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