



“The voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Environmental Liability: MEPs should follow amendments of the legal affairs committee at upcoming plenary vote

Brussels, 11th December 2003. UEAPME, the European association of crafts and SMEs, calls on the MEPs to follow the recommendations of the Legal Affairs Committee during the plenary vote on the Environmental Liability Directive on Monday. “We strongly support the Legal Affairs Committee position as it increases the legal certainty of the environmental liability regime making it easier for small and micro businesses to comply with the system” said **Hans-Werner Müller**, UEAPME’s Secretary General.

UEAPME strongly invites the MEPs to endorse the amendments that significantly improve the proposed Directive. Amongst other issues, the SME association urges the plenary session to back the Committee’s reinsertion of permits and state of the art as full exemptions.

UEAPME also backs the amendment according to which operators will not be required to bear the full costs of preventive or remedial actions when they can prove that the environmental damage was caused by an emission or event expressly authorised in the framework of a permit or authorisation issued to the operator. The SME association therefore recommends that the plenary adopt the amendment.

Furthermore, UEAPME sees the approach adopted by the Legal Affairs Committee regarding financial security instruments as the one offering more guarantees towards the development of such security instruments at a democratic price for SMEs, which is a major concern for many small enterprises.

Finally, with regard to cases of damage caused by more than one operator, UEAPME supports the amendment of the Committee that requires the competent authorities to apportion the share of the costs to be borne by each operator on a fair and reasonable basis, corresponding to the actual direct responsibility of each operator.

***** End *****

Note to editors: For further information, please contact Guido Lena on tel +32 2 230 7599

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