



## **“The voice of SMEs in Europe”**

### **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **Active Ageing: UEAPME welcomes Commission’s communication and presses Member States for action**

**Brussels, 05 March 2004** UEAPME, the European Crafts and SMEs association welcomes the Communication on Active Ageing from the European Commission published on Wednesday. UEAPME considers that the Communication comprehensively tackles all of the most important key challenges to making active ageing a reality in Europe.

The content of the communication is very much in line with the results of UEAPME’s own findings concerning adaptability and active ageing. In particular UEAPME has always stated that early retirement of older workers does not open up new jobs for young people, “we are therefore very happy to see that this is also recognised by the European Commission” said **Hans-Werner Müller**, Secretary General of UEAPME.

Mr. Müller also highlighted that SMEs have always been less inclined to make use of early retirement schemes. “They are aware of the value of the skills and know-how of older workers which they consider indispensable for the success of their business and in training their younger workers.”

UEAPME particularly stresses that a successful active ageing policy requires a partnership approach between governments, social partners and enterprises. But it is the urgent responsibility of national governments to

- reform social protection systems
- implement active labour market policies which promote flexible retirement schemes
- provide social partners and enterprises with legal frameworks for developing the flexible forms of work organisation required by older workers and enterprises

The big challenges for social partners are now to:

- find solutions at national level which link pay less to seniority and bring it more into line with productivity, so that older workers are no longer too expensive for enterprises to employ or retain.
- work closely with public authorities to provide older workers with access to lifelong learning.
- And finally, to change attitudes towards older workers.

\*\*\*\*\* End \*\*\*\*\*

**Note to editors:** For further information, please contact Liliane Volozinskis on tel +32 2 230 7599

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