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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Energy Using Products: UEAPME calls for workable and pragmatic eco-design framework for SMEs

Brussels, 29 March 2004 Ahead of tomorrow’s plenary vote at the EP on the proposal for a Directive on establishing a framework for the setting of eco-design requirements for Energy-Using Products, UEAPME, the European Crafts and SMEs employers’ association calls on MEPs to ensure that the proposal for directive is workable for small and medium sized enterprises.

“Unless the specific measures foreseen by the environment committee in its report are accepted by the plenary session- such as the establishment of a Community-level database, the provision of funding for training and information on eco-design - SMEs will not be able to meet the objectives of the upcoming measures” **Hans-Werner Müller**, UEAPME’s Secretary General said today.

Whilst supporting measures to promote the use of environment friendly production processes in SMEs, UEAPME urges MEPs to restrain from imposing a too ambitious directive. Indeed, SMEs and in particular micro-enterprises very rarely apply concepts such as Life-Cycle Analysis and/or eco-design. In most small businesses, environmental policy is still at an embryonic stage. The principles put forward in the proposal will require a cultural change in the design and production process that will not happen overnight. UEAPME therefore favours an educational approach instead of a coercive one.

Finally, the association calls on MEPs to accept the few amendments of the environment committee, which attempt to guarantee the principles relating to the internal market so as to maintain a balance between the three pillars of Sustainable Development.

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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