



“The voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Enlargement: can Crafts and SMEs in current Member States face the challenge?

Brussels, 15 April 2004 “Should SMEs fear enlargement? How will SMEs in current Member States cope with the enlargement challenge”? These topical questions will be at the centre of debates at the Third European SME Summit “EU- Enlargement: SMEs meet the challenge”, which will be organised by UEAPME, the European SME and crafts employers’ association, and the Luxembourg Chamber of Crafts on the 23rd –24th of April in Luxembourg.

The 2004 enlargement is the most ambitious project that the European Union has ever undertaken. It goes without saying that this huge political event will have an impact on the economy of the European Union in general and on small business across Europe in particular. But what will this impact look like?

Less than 10 days ahead of the finalisation of the enlargement process, high level representatives from the leading national SME associations in the EU and accession countries as well as academics, Commission officials and members of the Luxembourg government will have the opportunity to discuss the effects of enlargement on crafts and SMEs at the Summit. SME financing and innovation policy –two major issues for SMEs in an enlarged Europe- will also be discussed at the event.

The SME summit, co-financed by the European Commission, is an annual event bringing together leading SME representative organisations in the EU and accession countries to discuss topical issues for Europe’s SMEs. This year’s event is held in the framework of the Enter project¹.

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¹ ENTER: Enterprises and Enlargement – is a project of UEAPME and the Avignon Academy, co-financed by the European Commission Prince Programme. This project aims to raise the awareness amongst SMEs in the 15 EU Member States on the impact of EU enlargement.