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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Political agreement on unfair commercial practices ignored SMEs needs, says UEAPME

Brussels, 07 June 2004 Reacting to the political agreement reached by the last Competitiveness Council on the Commission proposal for a Directive on unfair commercial practices, UEAPME, the European Crafts and SME employers’ organisation, said that the agreement reached was incomplete as it ignored vital points in the eyes of SMEs. During a meeting of its legal affairs committee, the SME representative association was particularly critical of the decision to limit the scope of the directive to the relationship between business and consumers.

“We can only deplore the fact that the Commission and the Council limited the scope of the directive to the relationship between businesses and consumers only. This is quite concerning as it is well known that SMEs are often victims of unfair commercial practices from their competitors” said **Hans-Werner Müller** today.

Every year an important number of enterprises are put out of business because of unfair commercial practices. Therefore, it is very regrettable that after having stated in its explanatory Memorandum that “the distortion of consumers’ decision-making also gives rise to distortions of competition because the trader acting unfairly wins business away from competitors who play by the rules” the Commission finally decided not to extend the scope of the directive.

Finally, the association argues that this limitation is likely to cause a fragmentation of the laws put in place to fight against unfair commercial practices.

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