



“The voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Increased bureaucracy in EU funded research projects driving SMEs away

Brussels, 18 January 2005 UEAPME, the European crafts and SMEs association, warned the European Commission that the increased level of bureaucracy involved in EU funded programmes is preventing innovative SMEs from participating in research projects. The warning came ahead of the presentation of a report on the efficiency of Commission expenditures for IST related projects, which will be presented at the European Parliament today.

“The problem of the massive amount of paperwork, administrative obligations and costs must be urgently addressed by the new Commission. If the current trend continues, EU funded research projects will become an exclusive garden for large enterprises who have the time and resources to manage the projects under the new framework programme” **Hans-Werner Müller**, UEAPME’s secretary general said today.

The assessment report on the Commission’s IST projects demonstrates that the increased level of bureaucracy has led to a drastic decrease of SME participation in the IST priority under the FP6 in comparison with FP5. In recent years there have only been a few exceptions of projects that had SME friendly registration and control procedures, like the CRAFT programme.

“We therefore fully support Commissioner Reding’s recent calls for the reduction of the administrative formalities involved in these projects. We are glad to see that the Commissioner recognizes the risk that smaller companies might eventually be excluded from all EU funded projects because of excessive red tape” Müller continued.

“The Commission must find the right balance between the need to control its funds and the accessibility of its projects to all stakeholders in the market. Clearly, this balance is not in place today” Müller concluded.

The association further asks for a revision of the approach and the structure of the research programmes in order to allow all types of SMEs including those in the low-tech end of the market to participate in the programmes.

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Note to editors: For further information, please contact Raphael Anspach on tel +32 2 230 7599.

Raphael Anspach, Press officer
Tel: +32 2 230 7599/ Fax: +32 472 33 3525
Email: pressoffice@ueapme.com
Web: www.ueapme.com/pressroom