



“The voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE ISSUE:

Small businesses weigh in to support European Constitution

Brussels, 26 April 2005 European small and medium enterprises from across the EU sent a strong message to member states in support of the European Constitution at the 4th Craft and SME Summit in Portoroz, Slovenia on Saturday (23 April).

“If we pass up this opportunity and fail to ratify the Constitution, the resulting uncertainty will be a major blow to the European economy. The inevitable negative effect of this failure on consumer and investor confidence would act as brake on growth and job generation in the EU,” said **UEAPME Secretary General Hans-Werner Müller** at the Summit.

“Governments and all political actors in the member states must be responsible and play an active role in ensuring the Constitution is ratified, particularly in the countries where the endorsement of the electorate is necessary.”

The high-level gathering of representatives from SME organisations across Europe united in their criticism of the misleading campaign being carried out by opponents of the Constitution.

“The debate in certain countries seems to be about everything except for the Constitution itself,” commented **Paul Reckinger, UEAPME President and President of the Luxembourg Chambre des Métiers**. “What has the Services Directive got to do with the Constitution?”

“People need to be made aware of the facts. In simplifying the legal foundation of the EU and increasing the transparency of the decision-making process, the European Constitution will adapt the Union to current realities of Europe and be a major step forward for all its citizens. The only alternative, should the ratification process fail, would be to persist with the increasingly inaccessible and unsustainable mélange of treaties.”

All delegates to the Summit committed to actively working to increase the support for the Constitution in their own constituencies. The Dutch SME organisation, MKB, has joined together with the other social partners in the Netherlands to produce an information document in support of the Constitution.

“Crafts and SMEs account for two-thirds of employment in the EU; that is sizeable amount of the electorate. We need to play a role in ensuring these voters are equipped with the relevant information to make a decision on such an important issue,” concluded Mr Müller.

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EDITORS' NOTE: UEAPME represents the interests, at European level, of crafts, trades and SMEs in the European Union and candidate countries. Through its 78 member organisations across the whole of Europe, UEAPME represents over 11 million enterprises with nearly 50 million employees.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Richard More O’Ferrall, Press and Communications Officer

Tel: +32 2 230 7599/ GSM: +32 477 44 38 42

Email: pressoffice@ueapme.com Web: www.ueapme.com/pressroom