



“The voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Statement

IMMEDIATE ISSUE

Cooperation agreement between SMEs in the EU and Congo signed

Brussels, 30 May 2005 An agreement on cooperation between SMEs in the EU and Congo has been concluded between UEAPME, the European small and medium business organisation, and the Congolese Government in Brussels today (Monday).

“This is an important agreement, which will strengthen links between European and Congolese SMEs and provide both sides with an opportunity to learn from the experience and best practise of the other,” said **UEAPME Secretary General Hans-Werner Müller**.

The agreement is the first of its kind between European SMEs and their counterparts in Africa and will hopefully serve as a precedent for future agreements with other African countries. It was signed by Mr Müller, for UEAPME, and Mr Martin Parfait Aime Coussoud Mavoungou, the Minister for Small and Medium Enterprises in Congo.

The agreement commits both sides to develop a programme of cooperation between UEAPME and Congolese SMEs, including the following elements:

- To develop an exchange programme between SMEs and crafts, and SME organisations in Congo and UEAPME and its member organisations
- To work together to implement a national development strategy for crafts and SMEs in Congo to encourage the growth of entrepreneurship
- To increase awareness among Congolese crafts and SMEs of the EU and EU programmes

“UEAPME is pleased to have the opportunity to work with the Congolese Government to help promote the development of a thriving craft and SME sector in Congo. It will be two-way process however. This agreement provides a basis for the establishment of greater links between European SMEs and Africa,” concluded Mr Müller.

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EDITORS’ NOTE: UEAPME is the employer’s organisation representing the interests of crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 78 member organisations, which represent crafts and SMEs across the whole of Europe, covering over 11 million enterprises with nearly 50 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner.

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