



## ***“The voice of SMEs in Europe”***

### **Press Release**

IMMEDIATE ISSUE:

#### **Heads of State must act together to restore faith in the EU**

- **Necessary areas of institutional reform must be rescued from Constitution**
- **Agreement on Financial Perspectives would send positive message to citizens**

**Brussels, 14 June 2005** The European Council must send a strong message of unity and demonstrate that Union is still capable of taking necessary political decisions at this week's Summit (16-17 June) to restore confidence among European citizens, according to UEAPME, the European small and medium business organisation.

“Now more than ever, there is a need for clear and united leadership from EU Heads of State if the credibility of the Union is to be maintained both internally and internationally. The European Council must act as one to resolve the current constitutional crisis, as prolonged uncertainty would damage the EU economically, as well as politically,” said **UEAPME Secretary General Hans-Werner Müller**.

“Focus must be returned to the main aim of constitutional process, outlined in the Laeken Declaration, namely to enable the enlarged EU to function effectively and better respond to the needs of its citizens. Against this background, it is crucial that those elements of the Constitutional Treaty, which would adapt the legal and political structures to the practical reality of an enlarged EU, must be preserved and implemented as soon as possible.

“The necessary reforms of the institutional and decision-making processes are crucial to the ability of the Union to operate in the future. Rescuing these provisions and seeking agreement on their implementation would not in any way undermine the legitimate concerns expressed in the Dutch and French referendums.”

UEAPME is calling on Heads of State to put their national differences to one side and agree a timely compromise on the Financial Perspectives when they meet at the European Council.

“Agreement on the budget would show that Europe has not reached an impasse, as well as restoring some much needed confidence in the EU at a time when its public and economy badly need it,” stated Mr Müller.

“Cutting spending on areas like research and innovation, as proposed by the Luxembourg Presidency, is exactly the opposite of what the European economy needs right now. The Member States must agree on a realistic figure that will enable the EU to pursue its pressing aims in the areas of job creation and promoting economic growth. Success in generating employment and wealth is needed to restore faith in the Union,” concluded Mr Müller.

\*\*\*\*\* End \*\*\*\*\*

**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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