



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

### **Press Release**

IMMEDIATE ISSUE:

#### **Mixed results on progress under Small Enterprise Charter**

**Brussels, 16 June 2005** Member States made progress under some headings of the Small Enterprises Charter in 2004 but actions in priority areas such as taxation and improving the functioning of the internal market remain limited, according to a survey by Academy Avignon, the economic think-tank, which focuses on the SME and Crafts sector. The survey was presented to the annual Conference on the European Charter for Small Enterprises in Luxembourg by UEAPME, the European small and medium business organisation, today (Thursday).

“The continuing failure of some Member States to implement measures to support small enterprises in some of the key areas of the charter is a cause for concern. More needs to be done to strengthen both the status and legal basis of the charter, as well as to link support for small businesses, which account over 90% of the EU’s enterprises, to the overall success of the Lisbon Strategy and Europe’s ability to successfully generate jobs and growth,” according to **Blando Palmieri, Academy Avignon Secretary General**.

“The decision to end the obligation on member states to report on their annual progress under the charter is a serious blow to the credibility of the charter and will further limit its effectiveness.”

The survey of SME organisations in the EU15 indicates mixed results on Member States’ implementation of actions under the ten ‘action lines’ of the charter in 2004. The results demonstrated that progress was made with regards to:

- Training and education for entrepreneurship and the availability of skills, although more needs to be done to strengthen the regional dimension
- Strengthening the technological capacity of small enterprises

However, the actions of Member States were deemed insufficient in a number of areas crucial to the ability of small businesses to generate growth, including:

- Increasing the use of impact assessments, particularly assessing the impact on small firms
- Reducing the burden of taxation and adapting national taxation systems to ‘reward success’ of small businesses or to favour expansion
- Improving the functioning of the single market, particularly with regard to public services

“The pace of progress is still limited and this must be addressed if European small businesses are to fulfil their potential as the main growth generating sector in the EU. More needs to be done to introduce actions specifically targeted at small enterprises,” concluded Mr Palmieri.

\*\*\*\*\* 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.

Richard More O’Ferrall, Press and Communications Officer

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

Email: [pressoffice@ueapme.com](mailto:pressoffice@ueapme.com) Web: [www.ueapme.com/pressroom](http://www.ueapme.com/pressroom)