



“The voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE ISUSE:

Rejection of software patent directive a good result for European SMEs

Brussels, 06 July 2005 UEAPME, the European small and medium business association, has described the rejection of the software patent directive as a more favourable result for SMEs than the introduction of an EU software patent, following a crucial vote in the European Parliament today (Wednesday).

“Rejecting the directive is a better outcome for small businesses than agreeing to a text that would allow the patenting of software, which the proposal as it stood would have done,” said **Hans-Werner Müller**, UEAPME Secretary General, stated.

“UEAPME congratulates the parliament for rejecting the directive, which would have threatened the survival of small firms in Europe. The ambiguity of the draft as it stood could have led to the patenting of software at European level and this would have been damaging to innovation in the EU.”

“The Commission missed an opportunity to bring forward a new and more balanced proposal after the request by the European Parliament in February. Subsequent attempts by the rapporteur to amend the Council position and remove software from the scope of the directive were hampered by the intense large industry lobby and this is to be regretted,” continued Mr Müller.

UEAPME is opposed to software patents, which reinforce monopolisation in the software sector, damage interoperability and act as a barrier to innovation by SMEs. Small firms simply do not have the resources to engage in the costly and time-consuming process of patent application. This would enable dominant large firms in the sector to secure vast numbers of patents and result in crippling litigation costs, which would put small firms out of business.

***** End *****

Further information: Maria CIMAGLIA, UEAPME Legal Affairs Advisor, Ph: 02 230 75 99

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 officer
Tel: +32 2 230 7599/ GSM: +32 477 44 38 42
Email: pressoffice@ueapme.com Web: www.ueapme.com/pressroom