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### **Press Release**

IMMEDIATE ISSUE:

#### **Sustainability an opportunity for tourism sector**

**Malta, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2005** Sustainable development provides major opportunities for the tourism sector and should not be viewed merely as a negative challenge, according to **Claudio Albonetti, President of the UEAPME Working Group on Tourism** in an address to the 4<sup>th</sup> Tourism Forum in Malta today (Thursday).

“Although the commitment to sustainability models is an undeniable duty and ethical responsibility, it is clear that there are major economic advantages to be gained both for enterprises and for the economy as a whole,” said Mr Albonetti.

“One obvious example of the benefits of the growing commitment to sustainability is the growth in eco-tourism. As tourists are becoming increasingly environmentally conscious, their appetite for this type of holiday is growing. This is an opportunity for innovative entrepreneurs in the tourism industry.”

“However, consumers in general now demand a real commitment to sustainable business practises and the tourism sector is no exception. In a global economy in which tourism is developing continuously, there is a need for tourism that offers both quality and a high level of services, as well as respect for the environment and better use of the natural resources. Combining the two factors are key to remaining competitive,” concluded Mr Albonetti.

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

**EDITORS’ NOTE (1):** Claudio Albonetti is President of the UEAPME Working Group on Tourism and also President of Assoturismo Confeserecenti, the Italian SME organisation for Tourism and Retailers and UEAPME member.

**EDITORS’ NOTE (2):** 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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