



“The voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE ISSUE:

Strengthening employers’ organisations key for an effective European Social Dialogue

Brussels, 18 November 2005 National SMEs employers’ organisations, must be strengthened to make the European Social Dialogue more representative and, ultimately, more effective, according to UEAPME, the European small and medium business organisation, which took part in a UK Presidency event on Social Dialogue and SMEs in London on Thursday evening.

“If the Social Dialogue is to play a meaningful role in addressing the economic and social challenges of structural change and globalisation, employers’ organisations, particularly SME organisations in the new Member States, must be strengthened. This will not happen spontaneously: all stakeholders must play a role in ensuring that the social dialogue is representative,” said **UEAPME Secretary General Hans-Werner Müller**.

“Social dialogue is a sum of its parts and, without strong social partners, its ability to function and to deliver properly is limited. SME organisations in the many of the new Member States are poorly resourced and this hampers their effectiveness. All stakeholders – Member States, the Commission and the European Social Partners – must work together to improve this situation.”

UEAPME has welcomed the proposal by the European Commission to allocate 2% of the European Social Fund to capacity building for the social partners and joint actions. This would help address the problem of lack of resources. It is important that the Member State governments also support the development of these organisations as well – this was highlighted by a [study](#) on European SME associations presented by UEAPME at the conference.

“To improve the functioning of the overall European Social Dialogue and enable it to achieve meaningful results, UEAPME is calling for the possibility of ‘package deals’ to be introduced, rather than only negotiations on an issue-by-issue basis. This should improve the understanding and perception of the benefits of social dialogue, particularly among sceptical small entrepreneurs,” 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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