



“The voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE ISSUE:

Despite setbacks, Barroso Commission continues to weather storms

Brussels, 22 November 2005 Reflecting on the highs and lows of the European Commission’s first year in office, **UEAPME Secretary General Hans-Werner Müller** offered the following analysis:

“The new Commission has faced a steep learning curve in its first year in office but, while it has come in for much criticism, the political priorities it has identified, as epitomised by the Growth and Jobs Strategy, provide a good basis for tackling the major employment and economic problems in the EU. There are many positives to be drawn from the first 365 days.”

“The Commission’s commitment to impact assessments of all legislation, giving attention to SMEs, should prevent unnecessary or cumbersome EU legislation in the future. In addition, the ambitious simplification programme should go a long way to make the existing mass of complicated and often-overlapping rules more manageable but it must work with the Member States and the Parliament if this is to be a success.”

“While its handling of certain legislative dossiers, like the software patent and the Services Directive, have left a lot to be desired, the Commission has demonstrated a willingness to listen to the concerns of affected stakeholders and to adapt its approach to legislation in some cases, as the it did with the Optical Radiation Directive.”

Looking forward to the rest of the Commission’s term, Mr Müller stated:

“In the absence of any real strategic leadership from the Council, the Commission must step up to the plate and give some direction to EU policy. With a number of crucial legislative acts to be decided on next year, it is important that the Commission ensure the best possible relationship with the Council and, particularly, the Parliament. Persisting inter-institutional conflict would be damaging for the credibility of the EU and would necessarily hamper coherent policy-making.”

“With public support for the EU, as well as the Commission itself, at such a low, it will be crucial that the Commission play a more effective role in communicating the benefits of the European project to its citizens. While this mantra is becoming something of a cliché, its importance has not diminished. It will take more than a PR campaign to improve public perception of the EU: the Commission must engage all the stakeholders, particularly national governments in the process.”

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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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