



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

### **Press Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE ISSUE

### **European Parliament praised for sense of compromise in voting for a workable Services Directive**

**Brussels, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2006.** UEAPME, the European small and medium business organisation, has welcomed the outcome of the vote in the European Parliament on the Services Directive today in Strasbourg and especially the compromise that has been reached between the major political parties.

“The Parliament has shown today that it is able to find solutions on sensitive issues which have divided citizens and political parties for months. By listening to the concerns of the citizens and the SMEs, the Parliament has certainly contributed to closing the gap between the European Institutions and the citizens”, said **Hans-Werner Müller**, Secretary General of UEAPME.

UEAPME has continually reasserted its belief that opening up the internal services market is a crucial step for growth and job creation however UEAPME was concerned that the original text would have played into the hands of big enterprises and even opportunists seeking to undercut standards of service provision.

“By introducing the right for enterprises to offer their services in countries other than those where they are set up, the European Parliament is proposing a principle much closer to one of the four basic freedoms of the Treaty than the controversial country of origin principle, as it was formulated in the Commissions proposal. By adding that this free access and free exercise cannot be governed by provisions, which fail to respect the principles of non-discrimination, necessity and proportionality, the EP reminds the Member States the principles of good lawmaking. The exemptions to this basic right are only the consequence of the division of competences between the European level and the Member States”, continued Mr. Müller.

“Although this strongly amended text offers more legal security for SMEs, it still needs to be improved. We take note of Mr Barroso’s and Mr. McCreevy’s engagement of taking into account the Parliaments amendments. UEAPME is willing to contribute fully to this discussion, and especially to the upcoming discussion between the social partners initiated by the Austrian Presidency”, concluded Mr Müller.

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

**EDITORS’ NOTE:** UEAPME is the employer’s organisation representing crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 78 member organisations, which represent crafts and SMEs across Europe, covering over 11 million enterprises with 50 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner.

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