



“The voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE ISSUE

Parliament has to be driving force behind EU SME policy

- **UEAPME Secretary General discusses key policy issues for SMEs at the European Parliament**

Brussels, 22nd March 2006. European SMEs hope that the European Parliament will become a driving force behind a successful SME policy, MEPs were told on 22 March during a working breakfast. According to UEAPME, the European SME employers’ organisation, the Parliament must play a key role in delivering effective EU policies and strategies for SMEs.

“We expect the European Parliament to respect the needs of SMEs on important policy issues such as the EU Financial Perspectives”, said **Hans-Werner Müller**, Secretary General of UEAPME. “We count on MEPs to ensure that the ongoing budget negotiations steer clear of drastic cuts in the most important programmes for SMEs, such as CIP and FP7, and promote growth and innovation for our sector.” Innovative SMEs should be granted access to co-financed programmes under the EU Structural Funds, the innovation targets within the regional and rural programmes should be strengthened, and these programmes should be effectively accessible for small companies.

Small enterprises suffer from high compliance costs and red tape: compliance costs can be up to 30 times higher for small businesses in comparison to larger corporations. UEAPME warned MEPs that the debate on “better regulation” must be followed by a real legislative effort towards simplification. SMEs are looking forward to the implementation of the many promises made to them so far.

“On issues such as better regulation, no progress can be made without the crucial contribution of the European Parliament. The same applies to specific policy issues such as chemicals and the Services Directive, where the Parliament has already revealed its maturity and political clout”, continued Mr. Müller.

In a recent position message (1), UEAPME provided MEPs with a list of the most urgent policy decisions in support of SMEs. For each policy area, UEAPME indicated concrete measures and deadlines for action. European SMEs need these policy actions in order to fully realise their growth and employment potential.

“As a major player on the EU arena, the European Parliament has the duty to ensure that the needs of 99% of European businesses are taken into proper consideration during the EU legislative process”, concluded Mr. Müller.

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(1) European Policy for Crafts and SMEs: Now it's time for concrete actions
http://www.ueapme.com/docs/pos_papers/2006/060309_SME_Initiative2006.pdf

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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