



## PRESS-RELEASE

### **Business and environment federations jointly call upon Commission to maintain substantial fund for eco-innovation**

(Brussels, April 4, 2006). Three business and environment federations, the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME), the European Committee of Environmental Technology Suppliers Associations (EUCETSA) and the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) wrote Commission President Barroso and Commissioners Verheugen and Dimas yesterday to prevent a major reduction of funding available for eco-innovation support in the period 2007-2013. Due the outcome of the European Council in December 2005, the Commission is under pressure to reduce its overall budget for support for Innovation with some 30%. This also concerns the specific budget for eco-innovation, which was originally set for 520 million (in the seven year period). The organizations are concerned that in this process, this budget heading will be reduced much more, making it rather difficult for the Commission to show leadership in promoting eco-innovation in the coming years. The federations have jointly been sponsoring recently an expert advice on implementing economic and environmental objectives in line with a “competitiveness improvement cycle”, in which support for fostering knowledge and capacity is an essential element. They fear that a strong reduction in the Commission’s budget will create practical problems but also send a wrong message about the importance of eco-innovation.

The organisations therefore call in their common letter on the President and the Commissioners “for urgent action” to ensure that the cuts on the eco-innovation budget are not out of dimension with the general cuts. And they point at the recent European Council, which endorsed, on the 24<sup>th</sup> March, a set of actions, including the “*strong promotion and diffusion of eco-innovations and environmental technologies*”.

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