



*“The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe”*

## Spanish Presidency will put SMEs at the heart of Europe’s recovery

*UEAPME Board of Directors hosted by CEPYME meets in Madrid with Ministers Corbacho and Garrido*

Brussels, 26 October 2009 – The upcoming Spanish Presidency of the EU will be instrumental in lifting Europe out of the current financial and economic crisis, according to UEAPME, the European craft and SME employers’ organisation. The Board of Directors of UEAPME met in Madrid last Friday to discuss the priorities of the Spanish Presidency with Mr Diego Lopez Garrido, Spanish Secretary of State for the EU, and Mr Celestino Corbacho, Spanish Minister for Labour and Immigration. Both Ministers reassured participants of the intention of the Spanish Government to prioritise SMEs during the EU Presidency. The fruitful meeting, hosted by our Spanish member CEPYME, dealt both with broad policy guidelines and specific dossiers such as the late payments directive, identified by CEPYME’s President Jesús Bárcenas Lopez as one of the priorities to be tackled in the near future.

*“Our recent Craft and SME Barometer measured a slight increase in SMEs’ confidence despite a worrying economic reality. The presence of two Spanish Ministers at our meeting and their positive words are additional causes of hope and a clear sign of the attention that the Spanish Government devotes to SMEs. We hope that this attention will result in concrete improvements for SMEs during the Spanish Presidency”,* said **Georg Toifl**, UEAPME President.

*“National governments must listen to SMEs and be aware of our reality, our problems and our proposals. We are faced with several challenges nowadays, from the economic crisis to increasing late payments. Only a serious dialogue with all representative stakeholders will lead us out of the crisis. Today’s meeting is an important step in this process”,* said CEPYME President **Jesús Bárcenas Lopez**.

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**EDITORS’ NOTES:** UEAPME is the employers’ organisation representing exclusively crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 83 member organisations covering over 12 million enterprises with 55 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner. For further information: <http://www.ueapme.com/>

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