



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

## **Cooperation agreement with UEAPME strengthens SME Academy Avignon activities**

*SME Academy Avignon will support UEAPME's work with training, studies, and technical partnership for projects*

Brussels, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016 – At its General Assembly in Vienna, UEAPME agreed and signed a multi-annual co-operation agreement with SME Academy Avignon. Adding to the long lasting relations between the two organisations, the deepening of the co-operation will allow SME Academy Avignon to make a fresh start and broaden its activities for SMEs in Europe. At the same time, UEAPME will profit from this cooperation for the work carried out in the interest of Crafts and SMEs in Europe. UEAPME expects evidence-proven input for its policy work and a better exchange of information between SME associations and the scientific world at both national and European level.

SME Academy Avignon was established by UEAPME and some of its member organisations to act as a think tank and scientific body to help Craft and SME associations in their policy work as well as create a network of researchers working on issues relevant for SMEs. Since its foundation in 1998, SME Academy Avignon has supported UEAPME and the other founding bodies in their promotion of SME agendas. Through a wide range of collaborations (such as the development and implementation of EU training programs, joint conferences and research, the dissemination of information at EU and National levels), SME Academy Avignon has developed to an important partner for UEAPME and its members.

The main objectives of the new in-depth co-operation is to support of the political work of UEAPME and its member organisations by SME Academy Avignon, especially as regards anticipating and indicating changes and new trends in the needs of Crafts and SMEs. In order to strengthen the capacity of SME Academy Avignon, UEAPME will encourage its member organisations to exchange information with SME Academy Avignon, hence providing access to its member networks, to its political and professional network at European level, and to Crafts and SMEs in Europe via its member organisations.

**EDITORS' NOTES:** UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 80 member organisations covering over 12 million enterprises with 55 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner. For further information please visit <http://www.ueapme.com/> or follow [@UEAPME](https://twitter.com/UEAPME) on Twitter.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:**

Gerhard Huemer, Study Unit Director, +32 (0)2 230 7599, [g.huemer@ueapme.com](mailto:g.huemer@ueapme.com)  
Jenny Manin, Press and Communications Officer, +32 (0)496 520 329, [pressoffice@ueapme.com](mailto:pressoffice@ueapme.com)