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2005





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UEAPME'S MEMBERS

UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing the interests of European crafts, trades and SMEs at EU level. UEAPME is a recognised European Social Partner and acts on behalf of crafts and SMEs in the European Social Dialogue and in discussions with the EU institutions. It is a non-profit seeking and non-partisan organisation.

As the European SME umbrella organisation, UEAPME represents 81 member organisations consisting of national cross-sectoral SME federations, European branch federations and other associate members, which support the SME family. Across the whole of Europe, UEAPME represents over 11 million enterprises with nearly 50 million employees.

UEAPME'S AIMS

The main objectives of UEAPME, as the voice of crafts, trades and SMEs in Europe include:

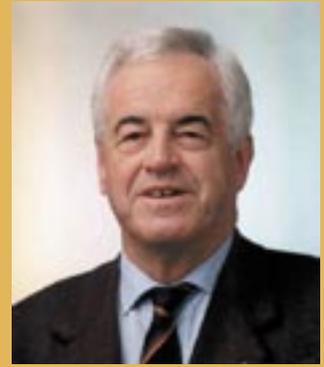
- Monitoring the EU policy and legislative process and keep its members informed on all matters of European Union policy of relevance to crafts, trades and SMEs;
- Representing and promoting the interests, needs and opinions of its member organisations to the EU institutions and other international organisations;
- Supporting its members academically, technically and legally on all areas of EU policy;
- Supporting the idea of European integration and contributing to European co-operation.



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***FOREWORD BY
THE PRESIDENT***



Paul Reckinger, President



Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to present you with the UEAPME annual report 2005, which gives an overview of the activities taking place during my third year as President.

Unfortunately, this year has not been one of the most successful at EU level: we all know the outcome of the referenda on the EU Constitution in France and in the Netherlands, which resulted in a deadlock of the ratification process, as well as the problems linked to the approval of the new EU Budget. Undoubtedly, some SMEs in different Member States joined this anti-European feeling, frightened by the consequences of the enlargement process as well as by the perspectives of a further widening of the European Union. Even though a good part of these fears have no "raison d'être", and UEAPME and its member organisations have always supported the European integration process, it is obvious that important steps have to be taken to regain SMEs' trust in the European institutions.

The EU should really start building up a favourable framework for SMEs, which are the recognised backbone of our economy, to be set up and grow: the "think small principle" should be the basis of each European policy. This means less bureaucracy, less useless legislation and more SME-specific impact assessment, more simplification, more focus on competitiveness, also with a view to the growing globalisation, and better access to finance!

This is the message I have been trying to pass to both the European Commissioners close to our world, Mr Spidla, for Social Affairs, and Mr Verheugen, for Enterprise Policy, and to the national governments having the EU Presidency: my own government during the Luxembourgian Presidency, the UK Government during our General Assembly in December and the Austrian Government when I met Mr Bartenstein, Austrian Minister for Economic Affairs and Labour.

Meanwhile, UEAPME has been engaged in important activities aimed at making our members, and SMEs in general, aware of important developments at EU level on files affecting them directly: the 60 Basel II and Corporate Social Responsibility conferences at national level and the SPORT partnership on REACH just to mention a few. We also took the time for an in-depth debate on the revised Lisbon agenda and its consequences for our world during the traditional craft and SME Summit. The 4th edition was organised in Porto Roz by the Avignon Academy, UEAPME and its Slovenian Member, OSZ.

Therefore, I can only seize this occasion to thank all my colleagues of the Board of Directors, the Secretary General, UEAPME's bodies and Secretariat, and of course our members, for their precious commitment to our cause in 2005. I am quite confident that I can rely on their enthusiasm during next year as well!



Paul Reckinger
President

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INTRODUCTION BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL



Hans-Werner Müller, Secretary General



An unprecedented crisis of confidence struck Europe in 2005. It was mainly due to the discussions about the Constitution and the subsequent “no” in France and the Netherlands, to the lack of an economic recovering and finally to the ongoing debate on the budget of the European Union. This background has influenced our actions as the voice of crafts, trades and SMEs in Europe.

Nevertheless, there have also been positive developments: the re-launch of the Lisbon Strategy in spring, for instance, by refocusing on growth and employment in Europe, the increased focus on SMEs in European politics etc.

In 2005 we also celebrated 20 years of Social Dialogue — what a long way for UEAPME until our President could sign an agreement in the framework of the European Social Dialogue. We continued our collaboration with the partners in the European Social Dialogue, big industry on one side and trade unions on the other side, by carrying out joint activities in other fields. Furthermore, the good contacts and joint activities with other organisations at European level, such as Eurochambres and Eurocommerce, also continued.

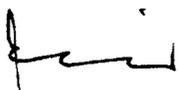
Thanks to the support of a couple of our member organisations, we could carry out successful projects on issues such as CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) and Basel II, with a series of conferences in different Member States. Another important point was the intensive contacts and our collaboration with our members in new Member States and candidate countries. Despite the discussions about the crisis of the EU, organisations are still applying for membership and moving to Brussels. Our Croatian Member HOK, for instance, opened an office in Brussels last year.

Our main institutional partners at European level are the European Commission and the European Parliament. Good contacts with them are a prerequisite for our successful work at European level and we are glad to discuss with people who support SMEs in both institutions, but also in the European Economic and Social Committee. We also had the opportunity to meet high-ranking representatives of different EU Member States and discuss SME policy with them.

Under the UK presidency, at the end of last year, we had the opportunity to celebrate our General Assembly in the prestigious House of Commons in London.

Finally, I would like to thank all the people who have supported us in our daily work: Member Organisations, Members of the European Parliament, the European Commission, the media and, last but not least, the UEAPME Secretariat for the good collaboration.

I hope we can continue our successful work in 2006 for all European SMEs and craft businesses.



Hans-Werner Müller
Secretary General

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PART ONE *POLICY AREA ACTIVITIES*





ENTERPRISE POLICY, RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT, EXTERNAL RELATIONS, LEGAL POLICY AND ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION

ENTERPRISE POLICY

At the beginning of the year, the UEAPME Board of Directors met Commissioner and Vice-President Günter Verheugen to discuss enterprise policy and SME-related issues. UEAPME's key message was that the Commission should not forget traditional businesses if it is serious about prioritising growth and jobs in the EU. Later in the year, the UEAPME Board of Directors met with the Austrian Economics Minister Martin Bartenstein in Vienna to outline UEAPME's priorities for the Austrian Presidency, including promoting economic reform and agreement on key legislative dossiers such as the Working Time Directive and the Services Directive, taking into account the concerns of SMEs.

An open and continuous dialogue was kept with the new SME Envoy of DG Enterprise and Industry, Ms Maive Rute.

On the occasion of the publication of the Commission's annual report on the European Charter for Small Enterprises, UEAPME criticised the decision to include the Charter in the future Lisbon reporting, which will further dilute the Charter and make it even less capable of achieving its aim of improving small businesses in Europe. The lack of focus of the Charter implementation report has also been criticised, as it only gives an overview of governmental initiatives in the field of both small-and medium sized enterprises. Specific measures for small enterprises are almost completely absent, as well as reporting on the implementation at EU level. According to tradition, UEAPME and some of its Member Organisations participated actively in the Conference on the implementation of the Charter organised by the Luxemburg Presidency in Luxemburg on 15-16 June. During this Conference, UEAPME presented the results of its survey of SME organisations on Member States' implementation of actions under the ten action lines. The pace of progress is clearly still limited and must be addressed if European small businesses are to fulfil their potential. UEAPME welcomed and supported the initiative of Commissioner Verheugen to offer a short traineeship in SMEs to civil servants of DG Enterprise and Industry.

UEAPME participated actively in the consultation on and preparation of the new Commission Communication on future SME policy. It was made public during a high-level meeting with Commissioner Verheugen, where it was warmly welcomed by UEAPME, as the Commission acknowledges the need to apply the 'think small first' approach to policy making. But also concern was expressed that it will be meaningless unless it is followed by real initiatives.

UEAPME also participated in the consultation on the Framework Programme for Competitiveness and Innovation and called for small and medium sized enterprises to be the main focus of it. In addition, actions targeting micro-businesses must be introduced. Later in the year, responding to proposals made by the Luxemburg and the British Presidency to reduce the EU budget, UEAPME stressed that reducing the amount of EU budget spent on improving competitiveness would be a serious mistake. In its lobby work towards the European Parliament, UEAPME called on MEPs to make the CIP more concrete and to assign specific funding to promote innovation, in its broad sense, in small enterprises. The UEAPME Secretariat, as well as some national member organisations, participated actively in the "BEST-project of DG Enterprise on the consultation of small enterprises at national/regional level". This project analyses and evaluates how small enterprises are consulted at national/regional level, how and if their concerns are taken into account by national and regional governments. This project fits in action 10 of the Charter on better consultation of small enterprises.

UEAPME made sure to get SMEs on the map in e-business development. The Secretariat participated in the main fora and events, such as the eBSN Steering Committee for e-business in SMEs, the Research Conference on digital eco-systems, organised by DG Information Society, and the Strategy Review Conference on e-business held in Cambridge in December. We proposed inter alia to increase the number of e-business application projects, as to achieve better interoperability for SMEs.

Better regulation and simplification will probably stay high on our political agenda for years. The Secretariat participated in the public hearing on better lawmaking organised by the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels, on 1 June. In view of the Commission's so-called legislative clean-up, UEAPME published a report on the simplification of the "acquis communautaire", in which it stressed that more needs to be done to reduce the disproportionately damaging effects of legislation and regulations on SMEs.

The Directive on Services in the Internal Market continued to cause commotion. The proposal has been discussed during numerous hearings and meetings with stakeholders and also inside UEAPME Committees, structures and member organisations. In November, the IMCO Committee of the European Parliament took some important steps towards a workable Services Directive, by removing some of the uncertainties and providing a more coherent basis for opening up the services market. More in general, UEAPME has been asked at the beginning of the year to express its views on the Internal Market during a hearing held in the European Economic and Social Committee.

As in previous years, Corporate Social Responsibility was high on our agenda. During 2005 UEAPME member organisations had to implement the pan European campaign to raise SMEs' awareness on CSR, funded by the European Commission. 63 one-day events were held in 29 European countries. The yearlong campaign, aimed at raising SMEs' awareness on CSR, culminated with a conference in Brussels on 14 June, in the presence of Commissioner Verheugen and all representative stakeholders.

The UEAPME Secretariat, as well as some national member organisations, was invited to participate with national governmental experts in the DG Enterprise and Industry expert group on "Mainstreaming CSR among SMEs".

The specific expertise of UEAPME has also been recognised by the United Nations Development Programme, which asked the Secretariat to present its view on CSR for the Cypriot business community in Nicosia.

UEAPME dealt also with origin marking for imported products and contributed to the Commission's consultation on the Green Paper on a EU approach to managing Economic Migration and in the Consultation with social partners on the Regional and Cohesion policy.



UEAPME staff meets DG Enterprise: from left to right Ms Merchthild Woersdoerfer, Head of Unit SME Policy, Mr Emmanuel Berck, Unit E2 Business Cooperation, Mr Christian Weinberger, Head of Unit Entrepreneurship, and Ms Maive Rute, SME Envoy. UEAPME staff: Oliver Loebel, Director for Sectoral Policies, Hans-Werner Müller, Secretary General, Gerhard Huemer, Director for Economic and Fiscal Policy (Brussels, June 2005)

RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

Framework Programme on R&D

The 6th RTD Framework Programme is one of the biggest programmes of the EU, with a budget of more than 17 billion euro. It runs until 2006. For SMEs a record-high budget of 2.2 billion euro has been allocated, mainly to three activities:

- Participation of SMEs to large-scale and high-tech Integrated Projects (1.7 billion euro),
- Co-operative Research for individual SMEs, formerly called Craft (300 million euro), and
- Collective Research for SME-associations (100 million).

Regarding the first activity (Integrated Projects) UEAPME has mixed feelings. Only 1 billion out of the 1.7 billion has actually been spent on SMEs. The rest is either used by research institutes or not used at all. The reason for this is that these top-down projects are too big, too long-term, have too many participants (on average 30) and are high-tech.

Regarding the other two activities (Co-operative and Collective Research) the situation is the opposite: only 9 % of all proposals can be rewarded, as the budget is too limited. These projects are in heavy demand, as they are small-scale, medium-term and innovation related. In 2005, the Commission published its proposal for the 7th Framework Programme to cover the period 2007-2013. The proposed budget is 73 billion euro, of which 2 billion is reserved for SME specific programmes like Co-operative and Collective Research. UEAPME welcomes this. In addition, UEAPME lobbied that in total at least 15 % of the co-operative budget should be reserved for SMEs as was the case with FP6, which was taken on board by the Council of Ministers. This point will be discussed in Parliament and with the Commission. During 2006 UEAPME will lobby on these issues in the Parliament and the Council.

Expert Groups of the European Commission

Dr Neumann of ZDH is the UEAPME representative in the European Research Board. This important committee advises Research Commissioner Potocnik. In plenary meetings and in the Working Group on SMEs the importance of SME participation in R&D was highlighted.

The High-Level Expert Group on SMEs advises the Research Directorate-General, mainly on the Framework Programmes. It includes several representatives from our members: Berney (Ireland), Lichtmanegger (WKÖ), Dr Neumann (ZDH), Ravagnan (CONFAPI), Russomanno (Confartigianato), Schröder (UEAPME), Sorbi (CONFAPI) and Yvinec (APCM).

Ullrich Schröder of UEAPME is the representative within the Sounding Board of Commissioner Potocnik (preparation of the 7th Framework Programme).

Meetings of the RTD Committee

The RTD Committee met twice in 2005. Discussions were held with European Commission on the 6th and 7th Framework Programme and we received feedback from our representatives within EURAB, SME-HLEG and the Sounding Board (see above). Several possible projects of UEAPME and our member associations within the 6th Framework Programme were presented. Other items discussed include the Community Patent and NORMAPME.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

UEAPME activities in the environmental policy in 2005 were as usual multi-folded, even though they can be classified in the following major areas: monitoring new or revised programmes and legislative proposals, being represented in consultative committees and initiatives at EU level and carrying out service contracts with DG Environment.

Monitoring new or revised programmes and legislative proposals

- Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP) for SMEs

This programme, which aims at helping SMEs comply with environmental legislation, is of crucial importance. After the official presentation of the first draft paper from Directorate General Environment in autumn, UEAPME organised a specific meeting of its Environment Committee devoted to a discussion with members on 13th October. Later, UEAPME took part in the first official consultative meeting organised by Directorate General Environment on the Compliance Assistance Programme on 14th October, where Mr Guido Lena, Director for Environmental Affairs, made a presentation on how the UEAPME network could help achieve the aims of the programme. UEAPME drafted a new position paper on this issue as a follow up to this consultation meeting.

- Plant Protection Products

Following up last year's activities, UEAPME presented some detailed modifications to the draft revision of Directive 91/414. A bilateral meeting between a UEAPME delegation and Commission officials from different Directorates General was also organised in mid 2005.

- REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation of Chemicals)

UEAPME was active both on the European Parliament and the Council through meetings, position papers and press releases in order to influence the results of the first reading. The European Parliament voted on 4th October, while a special session of the Competitiveness Council on REACH was organised on 13th December. On both occasions UEAPME managed to convince the two EU institutions to approve some modifications aimed at making the future regulation more suitable for SMEs in general and, particularly, for SME formulators. This is specifically the case for the OSOR (One Substance One Registration) approach.

UEAPME was also involved in two important EU conferences on the development of the REACH proposal organised in Brussels on 31st March and 1st April and on 7th and 8th November. Mr Erwin Tomschik of the Austrian Federation of Chemical Industry (FCIO), part of UEAPME's Austrian Member Wirtschaftskammer Österreich (WKÖ), represented UEAPME in these events.

Moreover, 2005 saw the development and the accomplishment of SPORT (Strategic Partnership on REACH Testing). The participants in this partnership were the European Commission, the Member States and some business organisations (UEAPME, CEFIC and UNICE/DUCC). The purpose of this partnership was to test the processes and procedures along the supply chain as set out in the REACH proposal for 8 substances or categories of substances and propose alternatives where feasible and necessary. The results of the partnership were officially presented in a press conference on 5th July in Brussels, followed by a European conference under the British Presidency of the EU organised in London on 22nd July. Mr Erwin Tomschik, who represented UEAPME in SPORT, was one of the key speakers in both occasions.

- Waste policy

UEAPME took part in consultative meetings organised by DG Environment and presented position papers both on the revision of the Waste Framework Directive, originally due in summer 2005, and the Waste Oil Directive.

- Other issues

During 2005 UEAPME worked on other important files such as the further implementation of the Integrated Product Policy, the revision of the biocide directive and the thematic strategy on the sustainable use of pesticides.

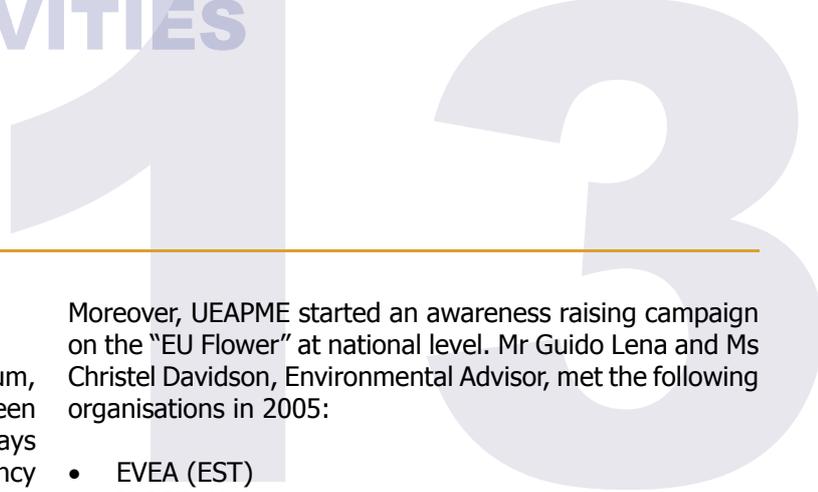
Representation in consultative committees and initiatives at EU level

- BEST Project on the streamlining and simplification of environment-related regulatory requirements for companies

UEAPME continued to be involved in the BEST Project on the streamlining and simplification of environment-related regulatory requirements for companies set up by Directorate General Enterprise. Mr Stephan Hirsch from UEAPME's German member ZDH was appointed expert in the project with the aim of ensuring that national best practices can be useful for SMEs as well.

- Partnership for a Clean, Clever, Competitive Europe (CCCE)

UEAPME continued its activity in the framework of the initiative "Clean, Clever, Competitive Europe" (CCCE). This initiative, initiated by the Dutch Presidency, regroups the European Commission, EU Member States and businesses. Its objective is to identify opportunities linked to eco-efficient innovations and to propose a series of concrete actions to improve the market perspective of these innovations. This should contribute to reducing the impacts of businesses on the environment, increase economic growth and create new jobs in line with the recommendations on the revival of the Lisbon strategy. In its framework, UEAPME appointed Mr Giorgio Russomanno (Confartigianato), Chairman of its Environment Committee, to the Group of Eminent People in charge of drafting a series of proposals to suggest to the European Council of March 2006 how to boost eco-efficient innovation.



- Sustainable Energy Forum

UEAPME was invited to join the Sustainable Energy Forum, set up by the Energy Council in the framework of the Green Paper on energy efficiency. This paper aims at finding ways to better use energy in order to reduce the dependency of the EU, saving resources and reducing pollution. The first meeting was organised on 13th and 14th October in Amsterdam. Mr Oliver Loebel, Director for Sectoral Policy, represented UEAPME.

Service contracts with Directorate General Environment

- EMAS (Environmental Management and Audit Scheme)

UEAPME organised an awareness-raising conference on EMAS for SMEs in the British Parliament on 7th March, in collaboration with its British member, the Forum of Private Business. The conference saw the participation of the European Commission, the British Competent Body and representatives from a micro and from a small business speaking on their own experience in the implementation of EMAS.

- The EU Eco-label scheme

UEAPME pursued its activities relating to the EU Eco-label, after obtaining for the sixth consecutive year a service contract with the Commission to represent the interests of SMEs in the eco-label scheme.

In accordance with the service contract, UEAPME:

- attended various meetings of the European Eco-Labeling Board and Consultation Forum;
- attended the marketing and policy management groups;
- nominated experts and provided comments for the following Ad Hoc Working Groups in charge of establishing the criteria for:
 - heat pumps;
 - printed matters;
 - soaps and shampoos;
 - soil improvers and growing media;
 - tissue papers;
- wrote position papers related to the second Eco-Label Working Plan;
- kept its members informed on the latest developments and in particular the upcoming revision of the scheme.

Moreover, UEAPME started an awareness raising campaign on the "EU Flower" at national level. Mr Guido Lena and Ms Christel Davidson, Environmental Advisor, met the following organisations in 2005:

- EVEA (EST)
- IPOSZ (HU)
- MKB-Nederland (NL)
- OSZ (SLO)
- SY (SF)
- SZZ (SK)
- ZRP (PL)

The meetings flagged up the problems and challenges that SMEs in these Member States have encountered in the implementation of the EU Flower. A report to DG Environment for each of these meetings proposed some suggestions to overcome the highlighted difficulties.

More information about our involvement in the EU eco-label scheme can be found on the UEAPME website.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Mediterranean Countries

UEAPME participates in the Working Group on Euro-Mediterranean Industrial Co-operation, which is made up of representatives from the public authorities of the EU Member States and of the Mediterranean Partners, as well as of private sector organisations. Three expert groups were created at the meeting of 1st February 2005: Education for entrepreneurship, access to finance for SMEs and administrative simplification.

UEAPME was invited to participate to expert group 1, Education for entrepreneurship. This working group met 3 times. It focused on possible measures for SMEs and their organisations (information, cooperation and training, business support services) to develop the private sector in the EU-MED free trade area. First of all, it is very important to create new sustainable projects and facilitate the existing ones. It is also necessary to strengthen the experience and know how of the European and Mediterranean SMEs organisations, mainly in the field of Human Resources, capacity building Public/Private Partnerships. New information and communication technologies have to be spread as they facilitate the business-to-business dialogue in the euro-Mediterranean basin.

Finally, particular attention was also given to less favourable target groups (family based business, migrant workers) able to boost an entrepreneurship spirit in the EU-Med Free Trade Area.

ASIA-Invest and **Pro-Invest**: UEAPME participated in the Advisory Committees of these two programmes, in order to inform the Member Organisations about upcoming funding possibilities and projects.



Mr Hans-Werner Müller, UEAPME Secretary General, and Mr Martin Parfait Aimé Coussoud Mavoungou, Minister for Small and Medium Enterprises of Congo Brazzaville, shake hands after signing an agreement of cooperation (Brussels, 30 May 2005)

The specific expertise of UEAPME has also been recognised by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which asked the Secretariat to advise the Belarusian Administration on their SME policy.

On 30 May, Mr Martin Parfait Aimé Coussoud Mavoungou, the Minister for Small and Medium Enterprises of Congo Brazzaville, visited the UEAPME Secretariat. During this visit he signed an agreement between UEAPME and the Congolese Government involving cooperation for SMEs in the EU and in Congo.

The UEAPME Secretariat hosted the ISBC Steering Committee on 21-23 September in Brussels. The Members

of the International Small Business Council were informed about the latest EU policy towards SMEs.

The 16th World SME Convention (WASME) took place in Bucharest on 15-18 March 2005 under the title "SMEs internationalisation and transition to the knowledge-based economy". UEAPME's Romanian member, the National Council of Small and Medium Sized Private Enterprises in Romania, hosted the event, which was organised with the co-operation of UEAPME and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

UEAPME's Croatian Member Organisation, HOK, opened its office in the premises of the UEAPME Secretariat.

Enlargement and new Member States

- News update for new Member States and Candidate Countries

As agreed in December 2005, UEAPME has established a special news update for members from new Member States and candidate countries. It contains information on the enlargement process, regional policy and other areas of specific interest to these organisations as well as announcements of EU calls for proposals. In 2005, UEAPME circulated eight issues of this special news service.

- Business Support Programme

Along with its 23 partners, UEAPME finalised the project 'SME-FIT', co-financed by the PHARE Business Support Programme II. The general aims of SME-FIT are as follows:

- Information and awareness building at the level of SMEs regarding the community acquis in the fields of standardisation, certification, quality management, safety at work, environment and social affairs and employability;
- Institution building to strengthen the SME associations in the Candidate Countries and/or new Member States of Central and Eastern Europe.

The final report was submitted in September 2005.

UEAPME invited the European Commission to launch a new business support programme in favour of the new candidate countries. It seems increasingly likely that DG Enlargement will publish a call for proposals for Croatia and Turkey in 2006.

LEGAL AFFAIRS

In 2005, the UEAPME Legal Affairs Committee followed and gave its opinion on several European Commission and European Parliament initiatives concerning legal topics of interest to SMEs. Areas of specific interest in 2005 include consumer protection, contract law, intellectual property rights protection and computer implemented inventions.

The relationship with the European Patent Office has been strengthened. After the hearing organised in Prague by the EPO, with the support of UEAPME, in October 2004, UEAPME was invited by the EPO to participate as speakers to meetings such as the conference organised by the European Patent Academy (which is part of the European Patent Office) in The Hague on patent quality and the PATINNOVA 2005, organised by the EPO and the European Commission on "Turning knowledge into value for competitiveness". In September Secretary General Hans-Werner Müller met the President of EPO, Mr Pompidou, and his staff in Brussels.

UEAPME has continued to follow the procedure on the proposal for a directive on patent for computer-implemented inventions (software patent). The discussions in this matter have been very difficult. UEAPME was able to defend the interests of SMEs, producing a second position paper to develop the arguments of the first one. UEAPME has also participated in several meetings, among others a conference organised by the EPP and one from FFII at the European Parliament. Mrs Cimaglia from the UEAPME Secretariat was invited to participate in the panels of both Conferences. In September 2005 the European Parliament finally decided to reject the directive proposal.

In 2005 the European Commission decided to establish a working group to discuss the future of a European Contract Law. UEAPME participated as expert in this working group. Several meetings have taken place. UEAPME has participated to meetings on Notion of Consumer and Professional, Contents & Effects of a Contract, Service contracts and Overall Structure of the draft CFR.

UEAPME has also worked on the GPSD (General Product Safety directive). This directive has been recently modified and has created an obligation for producers and distributors to notify to authorities whether a product they produce or distribute can be dangerous. To make the notification easier the European Commission has edited some guidelines and a notification form. UEAPME, having participated some years ago to the redaction of the guidelines, has been consulted several times by the Commission on the notification form. The Commission has always taken UEAPME suggestions into

account. The notification form that has been presented to the UEAPME Legal Affairs Committee is now ready for use. UEAPME has now been consulted again by the Commission for the new report, after having participated in 2003 to the report on liability of defective products.

The European Commission has finalised the feasibility study on the European private company statute. Two conferences have taken place, one in January to explain the results at mid term of the study and one in December to explain the final results. UEAPME was invited as guest speaker at both Conferences. UEAPME regards the European private company statute as useful but not as a priority for SMEs, and its opinion was reflected quite well by the results of the study.

UEAPME continued to deal with the Directive on the legal protection of designs (98/71/EC), in cooperation with the other members of ECAR, to support the introduction of the "repair clause" in the directive. This clause, proposed by the European Commission, excludes small automotive exchange parts from the protection and prevents the creation of spare parts monopolies in the after sales market.

The European Commission has started to deal with the announced revision of the Consumer acquis. Some directives will be reviewed. UEAPME has been consulted on the matter several times and a representative of the European Commission met the UEAPME Legal Affairs committee to give explanations on the procedures of this revision, asking for UEAPME participation.

ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION

Since the successful changeover in 2001, the main task of the UEAPME Secretariat has been to follow-up the developments and eventual problems concerning the use of the Euro (double pricing, counterfeiting, fraud with look-alikes, use of 1 and 2 cent coins, necessity or not of 1 and 2 euro notes...) and to communicate them to the Commission and the ECB, mainly in the Euro-Cash Group set up for this aim. The ECB has started planning in 2005 for the second series of euro banknotes to replace gradually the current euro banknotes towards the end of this decade. UEAPME has actively participated in the consultation concerning the new features and dimensions, in which it stressed that the new series should be user-friendly and have a high degree of counterfeit resistance.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT

In 2005, UEAPME's activity in the field of social and employment policy has been characterised by a wide range of high-level events in the context of the Lisbon Strategy and of the 20th anniversary of the European Social Dialogue. In addition, a number of initiatives have been organised with the view of a better integration of the new Member States in the European Social Dialogue.

Strong Times for the European Social Dialogue

- Celebration of 20th anniversary of the European Social Dialogue (1985-2005)

In the presence of numerous past and present actors and witnesses of the European Social Dialogue, President Delors and President Barroso co-chaired a special event on 29 September 2005 at the Palais d'Egmont in Brussels to celebrate the 20 years of the European Social Dialogue. UEAPME, which participated with eight members, was fully recognised as the fourth social partner, whereas it was not present at the time when Jacques Delors launched the initiative.

A large consensus emerged on the importance and value of the European social dialogue, as well as on the vital role of the European Social Partners for good European governance. They were also called to strongly contribute to the modernisation of the European Social Model.

- Tripartite Social Summit for Growth and Employment

In March 2005, UEAPME participated for the third year in the Tripartite Summit for Growth and Employment with the Troika of the Heads of State (Luxembourg, Austria, Finland) together with the Ministers for Labour and Social Affairs and the President of the Commission. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the revision of the Lisbon strategy and in particular the way forward to revive growth and employment in Europe.

European Social Partners presented five joint contributions, consisting of:

- The Joint declaration on the mid term review of the Lisbon Strategy;
- A Joint contribution on EU Youth initiative;
- A Framework of actions on Gender Equality;
- The joint third follow-up report on "the Framework of actions for the lifelong Development of Competencies and Qualifications";
- The second annual report on employment "2005 report on social partner actions on Employment in Member States".

During the discussion, the European Social Partners reiterated their support for the Lisbon Strategy. They stated that the Lisbon Strategy remains as valid and as necessary as it was in 2000. They also stressed that Europe's weakness in terms of growth and employment needs to be addressed without delay.

On 24th October 2005, at the eve of the Hampton Court Summit, an extraordinary informal meeting of the Tripartite Social Summit for Growth and Employment was organised by the UK Prime Minister, Mr Blair, in order to discuss with the European Social Partners the topic of how to achieve the European economic and social goals in the context of globalisation, competitiveness and demographic change.

Each of the high level meetings provided an ideal opportunity for UEAPME to express the specific concerns of craft, trades and SMEs in the field of economic growth, competitiveness and employment, particularly in a difficult economic climate.

Employment - Main Outcomes

- The adoption of a "Framework of Actions for Gender Equality"

In March 2005, the European Social Partners officially adopted a new framework of actions for gender equality. The overall aim of the framework is to increase the employment participation rate of women. National social partners are called to take action on four priorities during the next five years consisting of: addressing gender roles, promoting women in decision-making, supporting work-life balance and tackling the gender pay gap.



- Negotiations

Following the Commission's consultation on violence, the European Social Partners adopted their respective mandate in order to start negotiations on violence and moral harassment at work in February 2006.

- Preparation of the new Joint Work Programme 2006-2008

European Social Partners are currently negotiating their second joint Work Programme for the years 2006-2008. It should be adopted by March 2006.

Enlargement

- New Integrated Programme to support the social partners of the new Member States

As a follow-up of the successful European Social Partners' pilot project on industrial relations entitled "CEEC social partners' participation in the European Social Dialogue: What are the social partners needs?" which took place in 2004 in five new member States - Slovakia, Lithuania, Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland - the initiative was extended and enlarged to the ten new Member States in the form of an integrated programme of eighteen months (December 2004 - July 2006) financed by the European Commission.

This programme is composed of four main projects comprising a prolongation of the pilot project in the five missing countries, a joint study on restructuring in each member state, a mentoring programme on competence development for the European Social Dialogue and two resource centres, one for trade unions, one for employers.

Employment and Social Policy

- The European Employment Strategy

UEAPME actively participated in all the consultations organised at European level on the annual procedure of the European Employment Strategy, including the drafting of the European Social Partners joint report entitled "2005 report on social partner actions on Employment in Member States". UEAPME regularly participated in exchanges on this matter with the Employment Committee.

UEAPME strongly welcomed the new integrated Guidelines for growth and employment adopted in June 2005 following the revision of the Lisbon Strategy.

- Working conditions

Following the European Court of Justice's decision to qualify on-call time as full working time, the debate was launched about the revision of the directive on working time. The most controversial discussion is about regulation and possibilities of opting out, flexibility of the working time and health and safety risks. In 2005 the Commission's proposal was debated in the Parliament (first reading) and in the Council, which could not reach any political agreement so far, mainly because of the opt-out clause. The file will be actively followed-up by the Austrian Presidency in the first half of 2006.

- Health and Safety at the Workplace

The main outcome of the year 2005 was the big battle of UEAPME and its members in order to totally delete natural sources of radiation (mainly sun) from the scope of the proposal for a directive on optical radiation. With a strong support of some members of the European Parliament, UEAPME succeeded in changing radically the position of the Commission and the Council, so that the final directive on optical radiation will only deal with artificial radiation. The official decision will be taken in the beginning of 2006 with the end of the co-decision procedure.

- Social Protection

UEAPME has continued its participation in the European Pensions Forum, where the work was essentially concentrated on the technical aspects of removing obstacles to mobility and on the preparation of the new proposal for a directive on the improvement of portability of pensions rights, adopted by the Commission in October 2005. The main debates will take place in 2006 at the Council and Parliament. UEAPME also participated regularly in the discussions between the Social Protection Committee and the European Social Partners.

- Main consultations under Article 138 of the Treaty of the European Social Partners in 2004 and position papers of UEAPME

UEAPME has responded to each of these consultations with a written position (see www.ueapme.com).

- Consultation on violence at the workplace and its effects on health and safety at work on 17 January 2005 (first consultation - The social partners elaborated a joint response in the form of a letter addressed to the Director General, in which they recalled the commitment made in their work programme to hold a seminar "to explore the possibility of negotiating a voluntary agreement" and asked the Commission to wait for the result of their work before envisaging further action on violence and harassment).
- Consultation on corporate restructuring and European works councils (second stage consultation of the social partners - No announcement for negotiations).
- Consultation on simplification of the provision of the health and safety at work directives concerning the reports on their practical implementation (2 stages – No announcement for negotiations. The Commission will propose a directive).
- Consultation on the Commission's services report on the implementation of Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services.
- Consultation on the Commission's services report on the implementation of Council Directive 1999/70/EC concerning the framework agreement on fixed-term work concluded by ETUC, UNICE and CEEP.

FURTHER POSITION PAPERS

1. UEAPME position paper on Commission's green paper on demographic change
2. UEAPME position on "the streamlining of the open method of coordination in the field of social protection"
3. UEAPME response to the consultation on the European Year for Mobility of Workers 2006
4. UEAPME position on the joint Employment report 2005
5. UEAPME position paper on the social agenda 2005-2010

Internal Activities

Nominations for the social dialogue structures in 2003-2004

Social Dialogue Structures	UEAPME representatives
1 - Social Dialogue Committee	Mr Benne Van POPTA (MKB Nederland) Mrs. Edyta DOBOSZYNSKA – ZRP (PL) + Secretariat UEAPME
a – Working group "Macro-economy"	Mr Alexander BARTHEL - ZDH (D) + Secretariat UEAPME
b – Working group "Labour Market"	Secretariat UEAPME
c – Working group "Education and Training"	Mr Jean-Patrick FARRUGIA - APCM (F) + Secretariat UEAPME

TRAINING

UEAPME had a very active year in the field of vocational training, where it was heavily engaged in the work of the Commission, the Parliament and Members States.

By the end of the year UEAPME had been accepted to participate in the Education and Training Coordination Group (ETCG), a horizontal body coordinating the implementation of the "Education & Training 2010" work programme. Furthermore, UEAPME has representatives in the newly established European Network for Quality assurance, and in some of the stakeholder consultation groups on Lifelong Learning.

UEAPME continues to participate in other EU level committees such as the Directors General Committee for Vocational Training (DGV), the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training ACVT and the Leonardo da Vinci (LdV) Committee.

Troika of the Education and Training Ministers

UEAPME met twice in 2005 with the Troika of the Education and Training Ministers for an informal discussion on the current priorities in the field of Education and Training, on which UEAPME could present its position.

Training Policy of the European Commission

The major focus of DG Education and Culture was on the joint biannual report on Education & Training 2010 looking at the Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in Education and Training, which UEAPME had the possibility to comment on during the informal meeting of the European Social Partners with the European Commissioner for Education and Culture and the Troika of Education Ministers, under the British Presidency.

- Internal activities

UEAPME members intensively discussed the European Qualification Framework (EQF), one of the major instruments of the Commission's Lifelong Learning Strategy 2010.

Concerning the follow-up of the "UEAPME Vocational Training Priorities", the conclusion of the Vocational Training committee was, after looking at the various activities where UEAPME was involved in, that UEAPME had been very proactive in the majority of these priorities, which are:

- The promotion and development of training by apprenticeship;
- The development of entrepreneurship;
- Guidance;
- The development of continuous training and lifelong learning in Craft enterprises and SMEs;
- Lobbying activities.

UEAPME succeeded in having amendments accepted by the European Parliament to the Commission's proposal for a new Integrated Lifelong Learning Programme, which:

- ensure individual participation by trainees in mobility programmes;
- provide accompanying measures for apprentices and young people in their initial vocational training;
- provide supporting measures for SMEs, in particular, very small enterprises;
- enhance the attractiveness of vocational education and training and mobility for employers and individuals.

UEAPME was also engaged in the discussions on the proposal for a Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications, formally adopted in June 2005.

Following up on the budget line of the European Parliament on a pilot "ERASMUS"-style programme for apprentices, the European Commission has launched in 2005 three calls for tenders for studies on the obstacles for cross-border mobility for apprentices. UEAPME will continue to actively observe the developments of the Commission's work in this field.

- Main consultations of the European Social Partners

UEAPME responded to consultations from the European Commission in 2005 with the following position papers:

- on the proposal for a recommendation on "the quality of teacher education";
- on the Draft 2006 joint progress report on the implementation of the "Education & Training 2010 work programme";
- on the Commission's consultation "Towards a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong learning";
- on the Commission's proposal for a Recommendation of the Council and the Parliament on Key Competences of the Council and the Parliament on Key Competences;
- on mobility in the framework of the proposal for the new integrated lifelong learning programme.

European Social Dialogue

Within the European Social Dialogue, UEAPME worked jointly with the other European inter-professional social partners in 2005 to produce the third report on the implementation of the Framework of Actions for the lifelong development of competences and qualifications, as well as the evaluation of it. This evaluation report will be presented at the Spring Tripartite Summit for Growth and Employment in March 2006. Thanks to the cooperation of UEAPME members, this report clearly demonstrates the efforts being made by national SME organisations in the field of training as well as the fruitfulness of flexible, non-binding instruments at European level.

The topic of lifelong learning will be fully integrated in the next work programme of the European Social Partners, which is currently being negotiated.



Mr Hans-Werner Müller, UEAPME Secretary General, and Ms Françoise Le Bail, Deputy Director General, DG Enterprise (Brussels, December 2005)

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL POLICY

ECONOMIC POLICY – HOW TO FIND WAYS OUT OF THE CRISIS

The debate on economic policy in 2005 was dominated by three major events and developments. At the European Spring Summit in March 2005 the Heads of State and Government agreed on a renewed Lisbon Agenda; at the European Summit in June 2005 they reformed the Stability and Growth Pact; finally, at the informal European Summit in Hampton Court (October 2005), they started a broad debate on the European Social Model and its compatibility with the Economic Reform Agenda.

The Renewed Lisbon Strategy - a Partnership for Growth and Employment

The midterm review of the Lisbon Strategy has shown that the agenda agreed in 2000 was too ambitious as regards its targets for 2010 and the number of policy items covered by the strategy. The **Kok report**, which formed the basis for the midterm review, stressed that the Lisbon agenda is about everything and, therefore, about nothing. Furthermore, the report has shown that there was no clear distribution of responsibilities for the implementation of the Lisbon Agenda.

The main elements of the renewed Lisbon Strategy (**Partnership for Growth and Employment**) are a strong focus on economic growth and the creation of new jobs, which should be achieved by a three-pillar approach (making Europe a more attractive place for investment and employment; knowledge and innovation for growth; creating more and better jobs) and should be better implemented by improving the governance of the whole process (Lisbon Report, National Reform Programmes, etc.). The renewed Lisbon Agenda is in line with the [demands from UEAPME](#) made in the forefront of the debate and is therefore supported by Europe's SMEs.

The Reform of the Stability and Growth Pact - Strengthening by Increasing the Flexibility

When the ECOFIN in March 2004 refused to agree on the recommendations made to Germany and France, after these countries had broken the 3% limit for their annual budget deficit for the third time in a row, the **Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) came into a serious crisis**.

It took more than a year to find a compromise on a reform, which will make the SGP more practicable and more flexible, while at the same time increasing its political enforceability. The reform, agreed under the Luxembourg Presidency in June 2005, is a **new interpretation of the SGP**, which is in line with the [demands made by UEAPME](#). It aims to strengthen the enforcement of the Pact in good times, provides more flexibility regarding the time schedule for budget consolidation during economic stagnation, has a stronger focus on the existing level of public debt and structural deficits and takes the costs of necessary reforms into account.

The Debate on the European Social Model - The Hampton Court Summit

The discussions about the ratification of the European Constitution and the failure of the referenda in France and the Netherlands have demonstrated that many citizens, including small business owners, are afraid about the European economic reform agenda and the future of their social models. This means that the European integration and the enlargement process are in danger to lose the support of the European citizens. Therefore, UEAPME welcomed the efforts made by the British Presidency to start a debate about the interactions between the economic reform agenda and the future of the social models in Europe. UEAPME contributed to this debate, which started officially at the Hampton Court Summit on October 2005. [UEAPME's policy paper](#) was well received by other stakeholders and UEAPME promised to [continue the discussion](#) within its community, with the aim to find a better balance between the needed economic and social reforms.

TAXATION POLICY FOR SMES – VERY LIMITED PROGRESS IN 2005

The experiment on **reduced VAT rates on labour intensive services** should have ended in December 2005. UEAPME tried the whole year to get a final solution or at least an extension for this measure, which is very important for the craft and SME sector in Europe to fight undeclared work and to increase official employment. Even though the Luxembourg Presidency brought forward a reasonable compromise in May 2005, neither Luxembourg nor Great Britain were able to get the necessary unanimity support by the 25 Ministers of Finance. The end of the experiment would have brought 200.000 jobs into danger. Fortunately this was avoided by a last minute agreement for a **5-year prolongation and an opening of the experiment to all Member States**, achieved by the Austrian Presidency in January 2006.

The project on **Home State Taxation for SMEs (HST)**, for which UEAPME and the European Commission started a campaign in 2004, **slowed down during 2005**. The recommendation for running pilot projects on HST, which was announced for the Spring 2005 by the European Commission, was only adopted by the end of the year. Furthermore, neither UEAPME nor the Commission have been able to convince one single Member State to implement a pilot project on HST so far.

Another taxation issue, which is important for SMEs and has been followed closely by UEAPME, is the **One-Stop-Shop for VAT compliance**, which is still blocked by the bureaucrats in the national ministries of finance.

SME FINANCE – FURTHER STEPS TOWARDS BASEL II

The political debate during the first months of 2005 focused on the final negotiations on **the implementation of the Basel II agreement** on capital requirements for credit institutions. UEAPME tried to get further [improvements for SMEs](#) within the new Capital Requirement Directive (CRD). In a close cooperation with the Rapporteur in the European Parliament (Mr Alexander Radwan MEP), UEAPME was able to achieve an obligation to **make rating procedures more transparent** and got better solutions for the **use of private and commercial properties as collateral**. In June the Council and the Parliament reached a first reading agreement on CRD, which paves the way for an in-time implementation by the Member States till the end of 2006.

UEAPME, within a consortium led by the European Saving Banks Group, continued to implement successfully a **dissemination campaign on the impact of Basel II on SMEs**, which included 60 conferences in 28 countries. With these conferences and the distributed material, UEAPME was able to inform thousands of SME owners, SME advisers and consultants about the impact of Basel II on SME finance and to provide them with instruments to prepare themselves. A [toolkit for self-assessment](#), which exists in 24 languages, is available on the Internet.

Furthermore, UEAPME was engaged to ensure the provision of the necessary financial means within the new financial perspectives and the new programme for competitiveness and innovation (CIP) for **credit guarantee and mutual guarantee schemes**. Both are important instruments to support access to finance for SMEs, especially for start-ups, innovative projects and for micro enterprises, which are hit by the higher risk awareness of credit institutes.

4TH SME SUMMIT: THE RENEWED LISBON AGENDA – WHAT’S IN FOR SMES

The 4th Craft, Trade and SME Summit took place after the European Spring Summit 2005, which agreed on a renewed Lisbon Agenda focusing on economic growth and employment. On 22 and 23 April, 80 representatives from Craft and SME associations from 22 countries met in Porto Roz, a lovely village on the Slovenian Adriatic Coast, to discuss the **impact of the so-called “Partnership for Growth and Employment” for small businesses**. Thanks to the support of the Slovenian Chamber of Crafts, which was a generous host of the event, UEAPME and the Academy Avignon were able to provide an attractive programme and an impressive environment for the participants.

The main items on the programme were a discussion with international experts on business transfers and business failures, an exchange of good practices and experiences as regards simplification of regulations for SMEs, and an exchange of views about fair competition and potential shortcomings of the renewed Lisbon Agenda.



4th Craft and SME Summit — Porto Roz, 23 April 2005

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PART TWO *PROJECT ACTIVITIES*



THE ADMM

ACADEMY AVIGNON

The activities implemented by the Avignon Academy in 2005 are related to several priority themes. As in the past years, many actions were conducted together with UEAPME and in cooperation with its member organisations. Their involvement has been very important for the achievement of the Academy results.

PRIORITIES FOR 2005

The priorities of the Avignon Academy during 2005 were related to the following issues:

- Annual assessment of the effective implementation of the Charter for Small Enterprises;
- Debating priority enterprise issues in the European annual Summit of Craft and SMEs;
- Analysis on the impact of the European Constitution on SMEs and Craft enterprises;
- Conjuncture analysis on the European economic outlook;
- Study of the Craft sector in Europe in order to promote specific policies at European level;
- Projects.

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN 2005

Scoreboard on European Charter of Small Enterprises

The Academy produced the annual Scoreboard on the implementation of the Charter of Small Enterprises in order to monitor the actions taken by the Member States and to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures taken for small enterprises.

The Scoreboard 2005 was presented during a European Conference in Luxembourg on 15 and 16 June 2005 and the presentation is available on the [European Commission DG Enterprise website](#).

The Scoreboard has been also diffused to UEAPME, to its member organisations and to the European Commission. The outcome of the Scoreboard is available on the [Academy website](#).

European Craft, Trade and SMEs Summit

The celebration of annual Summit of Craft and SMEs is a European event organised by the Academy, together with UEAPME, allowing high level debate among UEAPME members and experts on relevant issue for small and craft enterprises.

The 4th Summit of Craft and SMEs 2005 took place in Porto Roz, Slovenia, on 21-22 April 2005 with the support of the Slovenian UEAPME member OZS. The theme of the Summit was "The Lisbon strategy: simplification and business lines". Participants carried on a first analysis of the impact of the Lisbon strategy on SMEs. Two sessions of the summit analysed the issue of "Transfer of business and bankruptcy" and the "Simplification in the business activity".

More information is available at: www.academyavignon.net and www.ueapme.com.

European Constitution, SMEs and Craft Enterprises

In coincidence with the process of approval of the Treaty by the 25 EU Member States, after the signature ceremony in Rome on 29 October 2004, UEAPME asked the Academy to produce an analysis of the impact of the new European Constitution on SMEs and Craft enterprises, in order to allow SMEs to evaluate if and how the new Constitution will bring better conditions for them.

The Academy assessed the new European Constitution and produced a leaflet aiming to introduce to all European enterprises the new structures foreseen in the text and enable them to support the approval of the new Constitution. The leaflet was presented at the Porto Roz Summit.

More information can be found at www.ueapme.com/EN/projects.shtml.

European Economic Outlook

After the preparation phase, the Steering Group of the Academy finalised the methodology and the procedures for the European Economic Outlook for SME and Craft enterprises. According to these results, the European Outlook will have two survey periods during the year: 1st quarter (January, February and March) and 3rd quarter (July, August, September).

Taking into account the existing expressions of interest by UEAPME organisations, the Academy is considering the first year of exercise of the Outlook, which should produce the first report in May 2006, as a test phase. During this phase the Academy will evaluate the procedure, analyse the results and, if necessary, fine tune the methodology.

The participation in the European Economic Outlook of SME and craft enterprises of the Academy is open to all the UEAPME member organisations. The Academy expects that all of them confirm their participation.

European Policy for Craft Enterprises

As a result of the survey and the activities of a working group of UEAPME member organisations, namely APCM, Confartigianato, CNA, ZDH, CDMU, UNIZO, aiming to collect new elements of knowledge of the Craft sector at European level, the Academy produced a Summary report on the "European Policy for Craft enterprises".

The "qualitative approach" of the Craft sector, followed in the analysis, has put in evidence the two basic components of the craft enterprises: a) the profession and b) the business. While these two elements contribute to find many unifying aspects within craft and small enterprises, they also stress the limits of the "horizontal policy" pursued by the Commission at European level to address specific needs and risks of the sector.

The report also showed some issues related to the "family business" such as "leadership shift", "operational mechanism", "vulnerability", "group agreement", "succession" etc., which can shed new light on the analysis of craft enterprises and on the policies that are necessary at EU level. The Academy is continuing its analysis on the issue.

The report is available at: www.academyvignon.net

Projects

During 2005, the Academy has continued its participation as partners in projects that started in 2004 on the following themes:

- 1) The certification of competencies of managers in small enterprises through the project **ESO-CSA** aiming at accomplish a system for the certification of competencies in SMEs.
- 2) The University-Industry collaboration and its influence on regional development through the project **RUISNET** (Regional University-Industry Strategies Network) aiming at improving, valuing and promoting the recognition of the importance of university-company relations within the European regional framework.
- 3) The project **BON-COURAGE** (Business Opportunities through Networking and Communication about the Enlargement) aiming to promote cooperation between companies in different sectors (construction, metal, wood, food) to help SMEs find their way in the enlarged internal market.

The Academy has also submitted in 2005 new projects.

The first is the project **SPRINTER** (Social Partners Role Indicating Training Needs for European SMEs) aiming at analysing different practices of participation of Social Partners in defining the National Vocational Plans and at identifying best practices. This analysis has a high degree of interest and is meant to improve the expertise in industrial relations of SMEs and Craft enterprises, especially in European and comparative terms. It also aims to further the collection and the use of information on national industrial relations systems as referred to the National Vocational Training Plan, in order to reinforce the participation of SMEs in training process. This project will end in December 2006.

The second is the project **ECHOES** (European Citizenship enHancing the Economic and Social growth) aiming to reinforce the Network of active citizenship within the SMEs Associations in all EU countries and to increase the quality of the information towards the members on the issue of active European citizenship.

In cooperation with the project network and the experts of UEAPME, FEM and JEUNE, the Academy will organise under this project, during 2006, a "Cycle of 4 videoconferences meeting over IP" (CIVIP) including the Academy and Craft Organisations of 25 EU members States, with the participation of representatives of the European Institutions and of European NGOs, in order to present and debate four main issues related to European policies, their added values to the economic and social policies of the member states and their effect in terms of rights-duties and new active citizenship opportunities and behaviour.

Available Project Reports

1) "Irregular work: empirical evidence and new policy issues at European level", presenting a qualitative approach to understand the "different" aspects of "irregular" work in Europe and the policy-mix necessary to tackle the problem both at European and national level.

2) "Innovative forms of cooperation of SMEs in the single market", showing the behaviour of SMEs and Craft enterprises in using innovative forms of cooperation by effect of the single market and the potential of cooperation still existing, which needs to be promoted at the various decision making levels.

3) "Indication, evaluation and validation of competencies in Craft and SMEs", presenting the informal way of acquiring of competencies in Craft enterprises and possible procedures for validation, the competencies and the role of enterprises and social partners in this matter.

4) "Beyond Codified Knowledge: Towards a Broader View of the Knowledge Society": preliminary result of a pilot project. The report shows the existing doubts on the prevalent approach of the innovation policy based on high tech, by presenting the important role of low tech, which characterises the majority of SMEs, and, on the contrary, appears less important. "Codified knowledge", together with "non-codified knowledge", constitutes the basis of the "knowledge society". Neither of the two is able to contribute to welfare without the other, they are complementary rather than substitutive. A one-sided policy favouring only one of the two factors, therefore, will be inefficient. Copy of the above report can be requested to info@academyavignon.net.

5) A comparative study of the preconditions for SMEs development and participation in industrial relations: cross-national comparative research shows that the propensity of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to join business associations is significantly lower, as compared to their larger counterparts (Traxler 1993). At the same time, SMEs need more support from business associations in terms of both representational and services activities as a consequence of their more limited resources. Large companies, namely multinational companies, are less dependent on associational services and are also able to advance their interests autonomously in relation to unions and authorities.



*UEAPME Administrative Council and General Assembly
London, House of Commons, 5th December 2005*

EUROPEAN SECTORAL POLICY

SECTORAL LEGISLATION INCREASINGLY RELEVANT

With the amount of EU sectoral legislation increasing, UEAPME continued to strengthen its involvement in branch-specific policy areas. In doing so, UEAPME draws from the expertise of its 20 European sectoral member associations. They are grouped together in five specific forums, which allow them to develop joint positions on sectoral legislation and take a sector view on more horizontal issues.

CONSTRUCTION SECTOR FORUM

This forum brings together ten European sectoral associations, representing the various construction trades, as well as construction experts from UEAPME full members. Discussions focused on the following major topics:

- Public-private partnerships: a position paper was drafted stressing the concerns of small enterprises;
- VAT on labour-intensive services: a letter was sent to the German government asking them to accept the compromise proposals;
- European Qualification Framework: a position paper is under development;
- Services in the Internal Market: Forum representatives met with the European Commission on several occasions;
- Exposure of workers to optical radiation: lobbying activities took place to remove sunlight from the directive's scope;
- Other issues included EU standardisation, e-construction and the effects of reverse Internet auctions.

The forum met twice in 2005: 14 April and 24 October.



From left to right: Mr Hans-Werner Müller, UEAPME Secretary General, Ms Anja Weisgerber MEP (DE, EPP), Mr Oliver Loebel, UEAPME Director of Sectoral Policy (Brussels, October 2005)

HEALTHCARE SECTOR FORUM

This Forum is operated jointly with NORMAPME and brings together European and national associations representing manufacturers and dealers of external medical devices. The Forum sends joint experts to:

- the EU Medical Devices Expert Group, which brings together Member States, the European Commission, appointed bodies and industry observers (4 meetings in 2005);
- the CEN Healthcare Forum (CheF);
- the EU Health Forum of DG Health and Consumer Protection (one meeting in 2005).

Much effort was put in the preparation of the revision of the Medical devices directives. After numerous discussions, the European Commission accepted to put the following modifications in the draft revised directive as published in December 2005:

- requiring the "statement" under Annex VIII of the Directive to be provided to the named patient;
- requiring this "statement" to include the name and address of the manufacturer and any additional manufacturing site;
- requiring manufacturers of custom-made devices to maintain a post market surveillance system.

Discussions took place on the added value of a generic standard on good manufacturing practice for custom-made devices. The decision on the future strategy will be taken in 2006. Other issues included the Services Directive, the eHealth initiative, patient mobility and healthcare developments.

A number of German-speaking national and trans-national healthcare associations receive EU information in German and can use the UEAPME services for additional lobbying activities on the basis of service contracts signed with UEAPME.

The forum met twice in 2005: 18 March and 25 October.

TOURISM WORKING GROUP

The main activities concerned the consultation of member organisations on the necessity of standardisation for the terminology and the specifications of services offered by tourism service providers, holiday destinations and the requirements of facilities and equipment used by them, to provide tourism buyers, providers and consumers with criteria for making informed decisions.

As a recognised partner for the European Commission in the field of tourism, UEAPME and some of its Member Organisations participated in the Fourth European Forum on Tourism, held in Malta on 19-21 October. The main interventions by UEAPME representatives concerned the problems related to the seasonality of employment in the tourism sector and sustainability as an opportunity for the tourism sector. Sustainable development should indeed not be viewed as a negative challenge, as there are major economic advantages to be gained both for enterprises and for the economy as a whole.

UEAPME will continue to ensure that the interests of the SMEs in the tourism sector are taken into account in all policies, but especially in enterprise policy, environment and standardisation.

RETAIL WORKING GROUP

After a broad consultation amongst our Member Organisations, UEAPME decided to create a sector forum on retail and distribution. The role of the Forum is to better coordinate UEAPME's work in this field. A specific input was given on the position paper on the Services Directive, especially concerning the establishment of big retail centres, consumer policy and the euro.

UEAPME WORKING GROUP ON FOODSTUFFS

Smes Create Confidence in the Food Area

UEAPME is an enthusiastic supporter of the European Union's political priority of maximum food safety. Butchers, bakers, pastry cooks and similar tradespersons are directly confronted at their shop counters with consumers' justified demands for food which is 100% safe in terms of health.

Consumers have greater confidence in the personal responsibility that lies behind food produced by known individuals than they have when buying industrially produced foodstuffs. In the "food chain from the farm to the fork", small and medium-sized enterprises therefore make a major contribution to food safety and to the strengthening of consumer confidence. Small and medium-sized enterprises produce fresh, high quality products following traditional local recipes, which they then market directly.

Therefore, it is important that the specific features of small, medium and craft companies be taken into consideration in all legislation.

The Activities of Ueapme

UEAPME was present at the meetings of the European Parliament's Committee for Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, as well as the meetings of the Agriculture Committee, when food-relevant topics were discussed. UEAPME participated in all stakeholder meetings organised by the European Commission, relating to issues such as food security, labelling, traceability or packing.

UEAPME is a member of the 'Advisory Group on the Food chain' of the European Commission (created in 2004) as well as of the Commission's Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (created in 2005). UEAPME is a member of the European Food Safety Agency's (EFSA) stakeholder advisory board, created in 2005.

The positions of small firms are expressed in the framework of these teams of experts at the earliest possible stage of the legislative process. The working group also closely cooperates with NORMAPME, the European office for Crafts, Trades and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises for standardisation. This enables UEAPME to provide input for the technical Committees of CEN in the field of standardisation at European level. In the CEN TC 158 an expert of NORMAPME is intensively involved in the consultation on standards and food machines. The Forum regularly issues position papers on topical issues for SME in the food sector.

Personal Information from Producer to Consumer

Unlike when buying goods in general food retail outlets, consumers can obtain direct, competent information when buying directly from craft producers, an opportunity that substantially contributes to strengthening consumer confidence.

Appropriate Labelling

The measures and instruments that are proposed for labelling foodstuffs must be appropriate to the practical situation of these enterprises. In so doing it is particularly important to take due account of national particularities, criteria, customs and working methods, so as not to damage the culinary and gastronomic traditions of the different countries and regions of the European Community, which are important elements of our shared cultural heritage.

UEAPME supports the endeavour of achieving the greatest possible transparency for consumers. Labelling must therefore remain clear and simple. During 2005, UEAPME participated in several conferences and working groups of the European Commission for a clearer labelling. The identification of additives, such as colorants, preservatives, anti-oxidants and flavour enhancers by their E numbers already confuses consumers more than it provides clarity. The urgent aim should therefore be not to extend labelling but to simplify it and to direct it towards its purpose of providing real consumer information.

Confidence-building Through Realistic Legislation

It is important that the labelling of fresh shop-packaged food products can be adapted to the seasonal and individual fluctuations of the respective producer. Regardless of the season, every individual small and medium-sized enterprise produces up to 500 different products a year, at times in very small batches, with varying ingredients.

Because the ingredients of foodstuffs produced by craft enterprises are constantly changing, detailed labelling is unachievable. The unrealistic scenarios resulting from such a legal requirement would have the effect of severely reducing consumers' and producers' confidence in the legislative authorities. It is vital not to endanger the legal security of food producers.

It is precisely the individual composition of hand-produced foodstuffs that ensures the greatest possible safety for consumers and at the same time the greatest variety of foodstuffs on offer. Regulations that endanger this variety and limit the creativity of experienced craftsmen would represent an unjustified distortion of competition in favour of industrial food producers and lead to an impoverishment of the supply of national and local foodstuffs.

Focus on Allergies

Since November 2005 food ingredients that can cause allergies have to be labelled in the EU. This is a binding measure. This is not the case for unpacked food because it would cause a complex and confusing quagmire. UEAPME was successful in lobbying against compulsory labelling of allergic ingredients in not packed food. The respective EU directive was discussed for five years and came into force November 2005. Twelve main allergens have to be labelled on packed food now: cereals containing gluten, like wheat, barley, rye, oat, spelt, but also eggs, fish, shellfishes, peanuts, soy, milk, lactose, nuts, celery and mustard.

The proposal planned that non-packed food should also be labelled. UEAPME could show to the Commission detailed examples of the variety of bakery products in European bakeries. This variety is in danger, if all allergic ingredients will have to be indicated. No baker, pastry cook or butcher would diversify his products, if he would be obliged to change the label all the time. The still strong pressure on the European Commission to guarantee food safety is disproportionate. At the moment foodstuffs in the EU are as safe and healthy as nowhere else. To simplify food shopping for allergic people, special product lines without allergic ingredients should be created. In this way, concerned people would not have to study the list of ingredients every time.

Further EU Legislation on Food Production by SMEs

There are a number of other points that are relevant for SME in the context of the new foodstuffs legislation:

- The ingredients of a specific foodstuff are particularly **easy to trace** in small and medium-sized enterprises. There is no need to introduce further systems.
- Applying the **HACCP system** (Harmonised Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) does not make sense for small and medium-sized companies. Such an obligation would be greeted with disbelief in the companies in question. Instead, attention should be paid in the corresponding legislation to use hazard analysis tools that can also be applied in small companies, in ways analogous to the HACCP approach.
- The European Food Safety Authority (**EFSA**) plays an important role in strengthening consumer confidence. In this context, UEAPME repeats its requirement that a member in the board shall

represent small and medium companies. The particularities of craft enterprises in food production must be taken into account when developing scientific positions.

ENERGY

Over the past years, extensive EU legislation was implemented to provide a legal framework for open energy markets. In practice, however, national markets are still controlled by the former utilities. UEAPME drafted a position paper on the effects of energy market opening on SMEs. The paper states that small enterprises had only very limited benefit from liberalization. Some trades, such as technical contractors, may even come under pressure when energy distributors enter the installation and maintenance market with their tremendous financial power.

PROVISION OF SECRETARIAL SERVICES

UEAPME offers tailor-made service contracts to European sectoral associations to facilitate their direct involvement in European policy. The system has proved very attractive and the number of service contracts is thus increasing. In 2005, the following European sectoral associations were co-operating with UEAPME through such contracts:

- European Builders Confederation – EBC;
- Comité européen des équipements techniques du bâtiment – CEETB;
- Génie climatique international – Union internationale de la couverture et de la plomberie – GCI-UICP;
- Union internationale des entreprises de peinture – UNIEP.

In October 2005, the service contract with the European Telecommunication Services Association – ETSA came into force. Negotiations took place with the European Metal Union – EMU. The service contract is likely to come into force in January 2006.

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PART THREE PRESS WORK



THE ADMM

PRESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

PRESS

UEAPME's press strategy was taken to the next level in 2005. Having gradually expanded in the previous years, the UEAPME profile became a constant in the Brussels-based EU affairs media and coverage in the national media was expanded. There was a clear link between UEAPME's press visibility and policy successes, as evinced by a number of specific campaigns. The following are some of the achievements of the press office:

- UEAPME has now firmly established its profile in the Brussels-based media and visibility of the organisation's work in Brussels is now high
- UEAPME is now clearly regarded as the voice on SME issues by the EU media, as epitomised by its consistent coverage in European Voice, the EU agenda setter, and breakthroughs in the Financial Times
- Frequent contact from, and coverage in the main news agencies (Reuters, Bloomberg, AFX, Agence France Press)
- Increased coverage in the national media – press, radio and television. Notable TV breakthroughs with BBC and CNBC Europe, among others
- UEAPME became regarded as the driver of some key policy campaigns, through effective media work (for example the Optical Radiation Directive, VAT rates, Software Patents)

The goal is now to consolidate this progress and ensure UEAPME remains a constant in coverage on EU business issues and the only port of call for the SME position. With national press outlets now aware of UEAPME, it will be key to work with the national member organisations to ensure that the SME angle on relevant policy issues is reported. The new Communications Working Group needs to be developed to this end. One key target should be the devising and coordinating of a coherent pan-EU campaign, so that UEAPME can demonstrate that it is not merely reactionary and has some real substance to its work.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Working Group was set up in 2005, bringing together the press and communications experts from UEAPME's member organisations. After the initial meeting, an e-mail group was set up to keep the member press offices briefed on UEAPME's weekly press agenda. There was successful coordination between the UEAPME press office and a number of the member press offices on key campaigns.

The UEAPME Newsflash continued to be published monthly, keeping member organisations up to speed on the main EU policy developments affecting SMEs. The Newsflash also serves as a useful tool for keeping members informed on the internal work of the UEAPME Secretariat and of the organisation. The Newsflash is now completely hyperlinked and easy to navigate.

In addition, the UEAPME website continued to progress in 2005. The website is updated on a daily basis with all press releases and position papers instantly uploaded. The website also contains regularly updated content on UEAPME news and events (including photographs), as well all policies and projects run by the organisation.

See: <http://www.ueapme.com>

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PART FOUR COMMITTEES AND STRUCTURE



THE AADM

LIST OF THE COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS OF UEAPME WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE CHAIRMEN, VICE-CHAIRMEN/CO-ORDINATORS AND CONTACT POINTS IN THE SECRETARIAT

SITUATION AS OF MARCH 2006

Committees and Working Groups	Chairmen and Co-ordinators	Secretariat
Economic and Fiscal Affairs	H.E. Schleyer (ZDH - D)	Gerhard Huemer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Group Finance and Relations with Banks Working Group on Structural Funds Working Group on Taxation Working Group on EMU Working Group on Tourism Working Group on Retail 	R. Suominen (SY - SF) M. Di Venere (Confartigianato - I) C. Roy-Chowdhury (ACCA/FPB - UK) A. Henkel (WKÖ - A) C. Albonetti (Confesercenti - I) J. Alarcon (PIMEC - Merger Group)	Gerhard Huemer Cristina Murciano Gerhard Huemer Luc Hendrickx Luc Hendrickx Luc Hendrickx
Legal Affairs	P. Vesterdorf (Håndværksrådet - DK)	Maria Cimaglia
Social Affairs	C. Schweng (WKÖ - A)	Liliane Volozinskis Ralf Drachenberg
Environment	G. Russomanno (Confartigianato - I)	Guido Lena Cristina Marongiu
Vocational Training	A. Griset (APCM - F)	Liliane Volozinskis Ralf Drachenberg
External Relations	A.M. Ferraboli (C.N.A. - I)	Luc Hendrickx
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Group Central and Eastern European Countries Working Group Mediterranean Countries Informal Working Group Latin America 	UEAPME Secretariat A. Benassi (Confartigianato - I) R. Vila (PIMEC - Merger Group)	Oliver Loebel Maria Cimaglia Maria Cimaglia
Research and Innovation	R. Neumann (ZDH - D) (Acting Chairman)	Ullrich Schröder
Ad hoc Working Group on Food Safety	UEAPME Secretariat	Ludger Fischer
Working Group for Communications	N. Goulding (FPB - UK)	Francesco Longu

UEAPME POSITION PAPERS 2005

N°	Date:	Languages:	Title:
1.	January	E	Position on Reach Regulation – EP Hearing – 19 January 2005
2.	January	E	Position on a successor to the 6 th Framework Programme for R&D
3.	29.01	E	Comments to the document: “assessing economic impacts of the specific measures to be part of the Thematic Strategy on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides
4.	February	E	Position on the consultation document on a framework programme for competitiveness and innovation
5.	February	E	Health and Nutrition Claims Regulation Proposal
6.	28.02	E	Position on the state of play of the proposed directive on professional qualifications
7.	10.03	E	Position on the document “1 st Eco-Label criteria proposal soaps and shampoos”
8.	10.03	E	Comments on the background document (phase 1) on the revision of the European Eco-label for Soil Improvers and Growing Media
9.	March	E	Response to the consultation on directive 75/439/EEC on waste oils
10.	4.03	E	Comments on the Draft Joint Employment Report 2004/2005
11.	15.03	E	Economic growth and job creation: unleash the potential of SMEs
12.	18.03	E - F	Position on the Communication of the European Commission The Social Agenda 2005-2010 - COM(2005 33 final
13.	21.03	E - F	Response to the consultation of the social partners on the European Year of Mobility for Workers
14.	March	E	Comments on the draft Community Eco-Label Working Plan 2005-2007
15.	6.04	E	Comments on the second draft Eco-Label criteria for printed-paper products (10 th March 2005)

N°	Date:	Languages:	Title:
16.	15.04	E	Position on the Green Paper on a EU approach to managing Economic Migration – COM(2004) 811
17.	11.05	E	Position on the simplification of the provisions of the health and safety at work directives concerning the reports on their practical implementation
18.	17.05	E	Comments on the third draft Eco-Label criteria for printed-paper products (3 rd May 2005)
19.	20.05	E	Report on the situation of the generic plant protection sector and amendments to the proposal for regulation modifying directive 91/414/EEC (document SANCO 10159, Rev. 0 06/04/2005) drafted by the European commission
20.	1.06	E	Position on the document "2 nd Eco-Label criteria proposal for soaps and shampoos – Draft 12 May 2005"
21.	14.06	E	Comments on the second background document on the revision of the Eco-Label for soil improvers and growing media
22.	20.06	E	Position on the commission's questionnaire on the streamlining of the open method of coordination (OMC) in the field of social protection
23.	20.06	E	Public consultation regarding the proposal for a Directive of the European parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 93/42/EEC of 14 June 1993 concerning medical devices
24.	June	E	Considerations regarding the follow-up to the Green Paper on Public-Private Partnerships – COM(2004) 327 final – published by the European commission on 30 April 2004
25.	June	E	Position in advance of the European parliament vote on the directive on the patentability of computer implemented inventions
26.	5.07	E	Position on the European Commission's Green Paper on demographic change
27.	6.07	E	Comments on the effects of energy market opening on SMEs
28.	July	E	Position on the Communication from the Commission Restructuring and employment – Anticipating and accompanying restructuring in order to develop employment: the role of the European Union
29.	July	E	Proposals for simplification

N°	Date:	Languages:	Title:
30.	September	E	Directive on the minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from optical radiation
31.	8.09	E	Answers to the questions on the revision of the Eco-Label for soil improvers and growing media
32.	September	E	Comments on the document summarizing the reactions of the Competent Bodies on the questionnaire about sludge and peat in growing media and quality labels
33.	23.09	E	Comments on the draft criteria for soaps and shampoos dated 5 September 2005
34.	23.09	E	Comments on the draft Eco-label criteria for printed-paper products dated 7 September 2005
35.	5.10	E	Position on the Commission Communication on European Policies Concerning Youth
36.	20.10	E	Position on the Revision of the Waste Framework Directive
37.	20.10	E	Comments on the draft final Eco-label criteria for printed paper products
38.	4.11	E	Comments on the 3 rd background document on the eco-label for soil improvers and growing media
39.	22.11	E	Position on mobility in the framework of the proposal for the new integrated lifelong learning programme
40.	23.11	E	Position on the second consultation on the simplification of the provisions of the "health and safety" directives concerning the reports on their practical implementation
41.	1.12	E	Position on the Commission's consultation "Towards a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong learning"
42.	1.12	E	Study on the distribution of cosmetics in Europe: evaluation of cosmetics on the basis of the proposed eco-label criteria
43.	2.12	E	Comments on the 2 nd supplement to the 3 rd background document on soil improvers and growing media
44.	7.12	E	Response to the consultation of the ACVT on the proposal for a recommendation on "the quality of teacher education"
45.	December	E	Remarks on the Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP) for SMEs in the field of the environment following the consultation meeting organized by DG Environment on 14 October 2005

LIST OF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES AND STRUCTURES WHERE UEAPME IS REPRESENTED AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

(JANUARY 2006)

- Round Table of Banks and SMEs (DG ENTR)
- Measuring Instruments Committee (DG ENTR)
- Enterprise Policy Group, EPG (DG ENTR)
- Committee on "e-commerce" (DG ENTR)
- Medical Device Expert Group (DG ENTR).
- BEST Project on Streamlining and Simplification of environment-related regulatory requirements for companies (DG ENTR)
- EU Multi-stakeholder Forum on Corporate Social Responsibility
- Advisory Committee for the Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (DG EMPL)
- Social Dialogue Committee (DG EMPL)
- Working group "Labour Market" (DG EMPL)
- Working group "Macro-economics" (DG EMPL)
- Working group "Education and Training" (DG EMPL)
- Pensions Forum (DG EMPL)
- European Monitoring Centre on Change- EMCC (DUBLIN FOUNDATION)
- Payment System Groups (DG MARKT)
- SLIM "Simpler Legislation in the Internal Market" (DG MARKT)
- EFRAG (DG MARKT)
- LEONARDO II Programme Committee (DG EAC)
- ACVT Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (DG EAC)
- Education and Training 2010 Coordination Group - ETCG (DG EAC)
- Consultative Committee of Social Parties on Structural Funds (DG REGIO)
- Committee on Rural Development (DG AGRI)
- Permanent Working Group on Women in Rural Areas (DG AGRI)
- European Research Advisory Board EURAB (DG Research)
- High-Level Advisory Committee on SMEs (DG Research)
- Commission Working Group on the Practical Preparations for REACH (DG ENTR – DG ENV)
- EMAS Consultative Committee (DG ENV)
- European Union Eco-Labeling Board and Eco-Label Consultative Forum (DG ENV)
- Several Ad Hoc Working Groups establishing Eco-Label Criteria for different product groups (DG ENV)
- IPP (Integrated Product Policy) Regular Meetings (DG ENV)
- IPPC Review Advisory Group (DG ENV)
- Working Group on Minor Use/Niche Biocides (DG ENV)
- Committee on Urban Environment (DG ENV)
- Energy and Transport Forum (DG TREN)
- Sustainable Energy Forum (DG TREN)
- Macroeconomic Dialogue (ECOFIN)
- Euro Cash User Group (DG ECOFIN and European Central Bank)
- Asia - Invest Advisory Committee (DG TRADE)
- Panel of Experts for the Millennium Round of the WTO (DG TRADE)
- AL-INVEST Advisory Committee (EuropeAid)
- TABD (Trans Atlantic Business Dialogue)
- Health and Food Safety Advisory Committee on Foodstuffs (DG SANCO)
- EUROSTAT - Statistical information group

COUNCIL

- Partnership Clean, Clever, Competitive Europe on fostering eco-efficiency

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(DATE: 9/03/2006)

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