



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UEAPME will represent liberal professions in European Social Dialogue

Brussels, February 27th, 2003. UEAPME, the European federation of SMEs employers and CEPLIS, the European Council of the Liberal Professions have concluded a partnership agreement that lay down the principle of the representation of liberal professions by UEAPME within the framework of the European Social Dialogue. The partnership will finally allow the important voice of 14 million people involved in liberal professions across Europe to be heard within the social dialogue.

In today's joint board meeting CEPLIS president Mr. **Bernard Bour** and UEAPME's president Mr. **Paul Reckinger** have signed a partnership agreement, which will be the foundation of a strategic alliance with the aim of strengthening the voice of small and medium enterprises and liberal professions in Europe. Mr. Reckinger was very pleased with the new partnership "Our family is enriched by a new valuable element." "This collaboration is only natural", he continued, "in many ways liberal professions operate as SMEs, it is very common to see an engineer with an assistant and a secretary, composing a small enterprise."

Within this co-operation framework, both organisations commit to implementing a regular collaboration between experts and advisers in order to better draw up the promotion of joint positions and interests as well as to ensure the pursuit of political actions in Brussels. Furthermore, both organisations have decided to produce synergies at the human resource levels as the CEPLIS secretariat has moved to UEAPME's premises in Brussels. However, UEAPME and CEPLIS will retain their independence in carrying out their respective specific missions.

In order to prepare this partnership agreement both organisations have carried out a joint seminar on social policy, training issues and labour market to find common positions that will serve as the basis for their collaboration in the future. "This agreement has opened a new promising perspective for a fruitful representation of the values of our socio-economic group at the European social dialogue level", Mr. Bour underlined.

CEPLIS, which is mainly constituted by European Mono-professional associations and national, inter professional associations, groups 5 million professionals that contribute for approximately 10% of the European GDP.

***** End *****

For further information, UEAPME: Gerhard Huemer +32 2 285 0719
CEPLIS: Theodoros Koutroubas +32 2 511 4439

Raphael Anspach, Press officer
Tel: +32 2 230 7599/ Fax: +32 2230 7861
Email: pressoffice@ueapme.com
Web: www.ueapme.com/pressroom