



“The voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE ISSUE

Spring Summit will be the real litmus test for an effective EU SME policy

- **UEAPME issues SME policy priorities for the European Summit**

Brussels, 20th March 2006. The European Spring Summit 2006 will take place in a crucial time for European SMEs. According to UEAPME, the European small and medium business organisation, the negotiations on the Financial Perspectives and the upcoming multi-annual programmes will define the EU SME policy framework for the next years, and will prove just how much SMEs are taken seriously into account.

“EU leaders now recognise the importance of Crafts and SMEs, and their critical role for growth and employment. Unfortunately, their political rhetoric is rarely followed by concrete decisions and actions, which would really unleash the potential of SMEs to create growth and new jobs”, said **Hans-Werner Müller**, Secretary General of UEAPME.

UEAPME welcomed the announcement of the Austrian Presidency of the European Union to focus on SME policy at the upcoming Spring Council. It warned, however, that real policy actions couldn't be postponed any longer. In a recent position message (1), UEAPME provided the EU leaders with a list of the most important and most urgent policy decisions for SMEs, which have to be taken by the European Council, the EU Member States and the European Commission.

The paper deals with ten specific policy areas, ranging from the EU Financial Perspectives to taxation policy, from better governance to innovation policy, from the Services Directive to “flexicurity”. For each policy area, UEAPME indicated concrete measures and deadlines for action. “The forthcoming European Spring Summit must spur the way to these decisions ”, continued Mr. Müller.

UEAPME also stressed the need for action at national level. Member States will have a fundamental role in the Council decisions, and will be responsible for implementing the EU Directives in their national legislation in a timely manner.

“Europe cannot achieve its competitiveness and innovation targets without SMEs. However, European SMEs cannot realise their growth and employment potential without a proper policy framework in place. Our timeline for action will be a benchmark for evaluating the EU's real stance towards SMEs”, concluded Mr. Müller.

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(1) European Policy for Crafts and SMEs: Now it's time for concrete actions
http://www.ueapme.com/docs/pos_papers/2006/060309_SME_Initiative2006.pdf

EDITORS' NOTE: UEAPME is the employer's organisation representing crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 78 member organisations, which represent crafts and SMEs across Europe, covering over 11 million enterprises with 50 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner.

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