



PRESS RELEASE

Business and environment federations jointly call upon Commission to maintain substantial funding for eco-innovation

(Brussels, April 4, 2006) - - - Three business and environment federations – the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME), the European Committee of Environmental Technology Suppliers Associations (EUCETSA) and the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) – wrote to Commission President Barroso and Commissioners Verheugen and Dimas yesterday to prevent a major reduction of funding available for eco-innovation support in the period 2007-2013.

Due the outcome of the European Council in December 2005, the Commission is under pressure to reduce its overall budget for support for innovation by some 30%. This also concerns eco-innovation whose specific budget was originally to be €520 million in the seven-year period. The organisations are concerned that in this process, the specific budget for eco-innovation will be reduced much more, making it rather difficult for the Commission to show leadership in promoting eco-innovation in the coming years. The federations have recently been jointly sponsoring expert advice on implementing economic and environmental objectives in line with a “*competitiveness improvement cycle*”, in which support for fostering knowledge and capacity is an essential element. They fear that a strong reduction in the Commission’s budget will create practical problems but also send a wrong message about the importance of eco-innovation.

The organisations therefore call, in their joint letter, on the President and Commissioners “for urgent action” to ensure that cuts to the eco-innovation budget are not out of dimension with the general cuts. And they point to the recent European Council, which endorsed on 24th March a set of actions – which include the “*strong promotion and diffusion of eco-innovations and environmental technologies*”.

For further information please contact:

John Hontelez, EEB, tel. +32 (0) 486 512 127

Guido Lena, UEAPME, tel. +32 (0) 2 230 75 99

Tom Vereijken, EUCETSA, tel. +31 (0) 79 353 12 64

For more information about the Clean, Clever, Competitive initiative, including the advice mentioned above, see: <http://www.cleanclevercompetitive.com> .