
PRESS RELEASE



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THE VOICE OF BUSINESS IN EUROPE

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**CHINESE PRIME MINISTER ZHU RONGJI
ADDRESSES UNICE**

Today, the Prime Minister of China, H.E. Zhu Rongji, visited UNICE, the representative of the business community in Europe. The Prime Minister addressed an audience of over 250 European business leaders in Brussels on the major issue of EU - China economic relations.

UNICE President Georges Jacobs said he was "extremely honoured and pleased" with the visit of the Chinese Prime Minister. "This visit stresses the ever-growing importance of closer economic cooperation between China and the EU. It shows the commitment, of both China and Europe, to strengthen business ties further, which will benefit both sides enormously".

European business is very encouraged with the China - EU agreement on China's entry into WTO, which it has supported for years. UNICE considers it "a milestone along the road of reform in China and towards further integration of China in the world economy". UNICE President Jacobs stated that "Chinese membership of the WTO will enable Chinese and European business to take full advantage of the enormous potential for increased trade and investment".

Baron Jacobs expressed his hope to Prime Minister Zhu Rongji "that China's commitment to gradual opening of its markets and dismantling of barriers to trade will be confirmed in China's implementation of the WTO agreement". UNICE calls for the setting-up of a monitoring mechanism to identify possible difficulties and to determine, at an early stage, appropriate actions to alleviate them and prevent trade disputes from arising.

Business organisations have an important role to play in the development of China - EU economic relations, as the visit of the Chinese Prime Minister to UNICE underlines. European business is ready to play this role to the full. UNICE is deepening its relationship with the most representative Chinese business organisations. "This will help to improve the environment in which business operates and facilitate cooperation between Chinese and European companies. Furthermore, it will contribute to building the consensus necessary to launch a comprehensive new round of WTO negotiations, which will benefit China, the EU and the world at large", said UNICE President Georges Jacobs.

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