



Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe
Union des Confédérations de l'Industrie et des Employeurs d'Europe

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Dr Hannes Farnleitner

President

EU Council of Industry Ministers

c/o General Secretariat of the European Council

rue de la Loi, 175

B - 1048 Brussels

10 November 1998

Dear President,

Industry Council, 16 November: Competitiveness

In view of the next meeting of the Council of Ministers, on 16 November, UNICE would like to reiterate its support for continuation of a work programme for benchmarking determinants of competitiveness in the European Union.

The conclusions of the first four pilot benchmarking analyses conducted by Member States in cooperation with the European Commission will be examined by the Council. On the basis of its experience and direct involvement in one of the projects, UNICE wishes to underline the importance of three issues in particular.

Firstly, benchmarking of framework conditions remains essential for identifying best practice of public policies which impact on overall competitiveness of companies' economic, social and regulatory environments. The focus on framework conditions should therefore be maintained in future exercises.

Secondly, it is important to ensure that policy recommendations arising from the underlying analyses lead to action and implementation of measures required to remedy identified competitive weaknesses. In this respect, a follow-up initiative to benchmark implementation of recommendations should be considered.

Thirdly, expert business and industry participation in the design and implementation of benchmarking exercises should be facilitated in all appropriate ways. The valuable but limited experience that UNICE has had in connection with the logistics project encourages us to urge greater and more accessible business involvement in relevant future projects.

In conclusion, UNICE welcomes the emphasis on benchmarking competitiveness which the Austrian Presidency has promoted so far and hopes that this process may be continued in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Dirk F. Hudig
Secretary General