

27 April 1999

<p>UNICE DEMANDS END TO ADVERTISING BARRIERS</p>

In his address at the joint UNICE/ICC Seminar on “Advertising matters”, today in the European Parliament, UNICE’s Secretary General Mr. Dirk F. Hudig has attacked the different national rules and bans on advertisement, which prevent companies from promoting their products in the same way across Europe.

The current fragmentation of legal requirements for advertising in the Member States leads to serious barriers and distortion of competition within Europe, to the detriment of European industry. Mr. Hudig stated at the Seminar: “These restrictions on the freedom of expression prevent European companies from fully enjoying the advantages of the Internal Market and place European firms at a competitive disadvantage to their international competitors”. This is harmful to business, especially SME’s. Therefore, UNICE wants a quick end to all advertising barriers in the European Union.

With regard to advertising bans, UNICE finds this policy of ‘shooting the messenger’, European companies, is wrong and counterproductive. It is not by prohibiting the advertisement of a product, which is legally sold in the EU, that you protect consumers. This is a sign of lack of faith in consumers. Moreover, imposing restrictions means that today’s rapid changes in marketing and advertising techniques cannot be deployed to the full.

Addressing the EU authorities, Mr. Hudig stressed the companies’ own responsibility towards advertising. “Every advertisement should be prepared with a due sense of social responsibility and should conform to the principles of fair competition. UNICE thinks that this self-regulation in the field of advertising should be promoted further by the EU legislator”, the Secretary General concluded.

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