

Brussels, 14 October

**UNICE ANNUAL 'SME' CONFERENCE:
"ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS THE KEY TO
GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT"**

UNICE held today its annual SME Conference, which brought together about 250 entrepreneurs and decision-makers from all over Europe.

UNICE President Georges Jacobs said in his welcome address : “Europe needs more jobs. Entrepreneurs create jobs. Therefore, Europe needs more entrepreneurs.”

The President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, called on Europe’s entrepreneurs to seize the opportunities of the emerging economic recovery. “Entrepreneurs are the agents of change. The new Commission is ready to work closely with business to improve Europe’s capacity for enterprise and innovation.”

Commissioner Erkki Liikanen, responsible for enterprise and information society, announced a wide-ranging programme to increase the focus of EU policies on companies’ needs in 4 areas: “The Commission will champion the cause of regulatory simplification, completion of the single market and corporate competitiveness through innovation and the knowledge-economy”.

Dirk Hudig, Secretary General of UNICE, concluded by stating that ”Europe faces a unique window of opportunity to foster more dynamic entrepreneurship. The introduction of the euro, the new European Commission and the new consensus between European politicians and business as reflected today, raise optimism for the future of our economy”.

Reports of the SME Conference, order forms for the 'UNICE Benchmarking Report on Entrepreneurship' and further information is available on Internet: www.unice.org

Wytze Russchen

(32 2 237 65 62).