



Brussels, 5 November 1999

## **UNICE URGES EU FOR MORE COHERENT ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

Today, UNICE presented its new Memorandum "Agenda for Promoting Sustainability" to Commissioner Margot Wallström, responsible for Environmental policy, and to Finnish Minister Satu Hassi, President of the European Environment Council.

With this new Memorandum, European business reiterates its commitment to take an increasing role in promoting sustainable development. Sustainable development is only possible through the integration of environmental, economic and societal policies. Industrial innovation is a major contributor to a better environment.

UNICE wants clearly defined European environmental objectives with roles to all actors involved, not only industry but also consumers. The current situation, where different environmental targets can be contradictory, must be avoided in the future through a more integrated EU environmental policy. For UNICE, sustainable development requires an overall EU environmental policy framework, based on interactive dialogue with all stakeholders.

UNICE's approach aims at: more scope for companies' own environmental initiatives, more emphasis on partnership agreements between all parties concerned and more cost-effective legislation. In the end, this should result in more targeted action for a better quality of the environment. Such an EU environment framework should deal with policy areas such as air quality, climate change, waste management and integrated product policy. A carousel which displaces the impact from water, air or waste does not provide a balanced answer.

The Memorandum fully supports integration of environmental protection into other EU policies, but this is not a one-way street. Better economic evaluation of environmental regulation is also needed. Strengthening the competitiveness and technological development in Europe today is definitely a key investment in a better environment for the future. A shared agreement in society on the quality of the environment that needs to be attained, helps set longer term targets and enables the necessary periods of transition.

*Attached: UNICE Agenda for Promoting Sustainability; Memorandum to the European Institutions*