



Brussels, 8 February 2000

**UNICE ENTREPRENEURS CALL ON LIIKANEN
TO ADAPT TO NEW REALITIES**

This morning, a UNICE delegation of European SME representatives met Commissioner Liikanen, responsible for Enterprises and Information Society. The UNICE delegation called on the Commissioner to pay full attention to the position and main concerns of European SME's - the backbone of our economy - in the Commission's policy towards business.

UNICE's representatives stressed the enormous impact of the internationalisation process on small and medium sized enterprises. Due to the development of new technologies, fast-growing use of Internet and rise of e-commerce, awareness among SME's in Europe must drastically be raised and skills improved and adapted. "This adaptation to new realities is an urgent matter", UNICE Secretary General Dirk Hudig said to Commissioner Liikanen, "otherwise, our SME's will miss the boat of international competition".

The SME leaders urged Commissioner Liikanen for further simplification of EU regulation. "A simpler and more efficient legal and administrative framework is a key condition for SME's to operate in the internal market, which will contribute to the entrepreneurship and competitiveness of Europe", they stated.

Commissioner Liikanen reacted by saying that "it is the intention of the European Commission to present more concrete ideas to tackle the issues of entrepreneurship and innovation of SME's during the Lisbon Summit".

Finally, the UNICE delegation underlined the problem of 'business succession'. The transfer of family enterprises to the next generation is increasingly difficult and in some cases means the SME's have to be broken up, sold or dissolved, to which the European Commission's specific attention was drawn.

