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BUSINESS INNOVATION NEEDS A QUICK, CHEAP AND EASY-TO-ENFORCE COMMUNITY PATENT

On Monday 14 February 2000, Dirk F. Hudig Secretary General of UNICE presented to the Brussels press a compendium of UNICE position papers on Intellectual Property Rights. This compendium gives UNICE's views on a number of specific instruments and debates on intellectual property launched at both Community and international level.

The strategic importance of intellectual property rights was discussed and in particular the need to speed up the completion of the internal market.

After the harmonisation of national rights, the EU urgently needs Community instruments to enable its companies and in particular SMEs to compete on a level playing-field with its US and Japanese counterparts. Alongside the Community trademark, which is the only Community instrument that exists, there is an urgent need for a Community design and in particular a Community patent that meet user's expectations in terms of time to issue, costs and enforcement.

"Intellectual property must be given the political support it enjoys in Japan and USA or Europe will lose the race to innovation and technological leadership" said Dirk F. Hudig. "The growth of hi-tech start-ups crucially depends on establishing intellectual property rights in order to attract risk and venture capital. This is a central question of European innovation which will be addressed at the special Lisbon Summit in March. Prime Ministers need to translate their intentions to stimulate innovation and employment into practical decisions in Lisbon. IPR is near the top of the list".

UNICE hopes that this publication can help European decision-makers to accept and support user's needs in order to build a competitive framework for intellectual property.