

UNICE WELCOMES FEIRA CONCLUSIONS

Dear UNICE@News readers,

As it draws to a close, the Portuguese Presidency must be complimented on its determined and consistent approach in support of an ambitious strategy to improve the attractiveness and competitiveness of the European business and employment environment. The "Lisbon" action plan for economic and structural reform, agreed in March, was confirmed by the EU summit in Feira, on 19-20 June. Member States must now press ahead with implementation of this reform agenda which holds the key to raising growth potential in the EU, reducing constraints on innovation and entrepreneurship, and increasing market confidence in the value and stability of the euro.

The other big challenge for Europe - enlargement of the EU - is on track. The Intergovernmental Conference on institutional reform is moving forward slowly but surely, though hard negotiations lay ahead if the EU is to give itself an efficient decision-making system, capable of delivering results with a greatly expanded membership. Indeed, in UNICE's message addressed by our Council of Presidents to participants in the summit, we emphasised the need to give a clear strategic direction to the IGC, without which negotiations would risk being side-tracked and delay the enlargement process. (To obtain the full text of UNICE's message, please visit: [http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/238E7E2F21A01143C1256903002AF98B/\\$File/Feira-e.pdf](http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/238E7E2F21A01143C1256903002AF98B/$File/Feira-e.pdf)).

In particular, UNICE called for the extension of qualified majority voting to several important areas for business, notably in relation to removal of tax obstacles in the single market and to strengthening the role of the EU in international trade and investment negotiations within the common commercial policy.

Attention will now turn to the French Presidency. It is to be hoped France will look forward, not backwards, in setting the priorities for the next six months. The first signs with regard to the shockingly retrograde social agenda as presented by the French government, are not very hopeful for the business community or employment. UNICE will follow this very closely.

I strongly recommend you this month's UNICE@News, which has many useful news-items, information and prospects. You just 'click and go'. UNICE@News will be back in September and I wish you relaxing and inspiring summer holidays!

Dirk F. Hudig
Secretary General UNICE

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UNICE INSIDE**THE FIRST EUROPEAN BUSINESS SUMMIT A BIG SUCCESS!**

If we want to innovate, we must dare to dream. This was one of the pointers given by Steve Ballmer, Microsoft CEO, to more than 1,000 participants in the first European Business Summit (EBS) which was held earlier this month in Brussels. This summit fully achieved its objective: establishing direct contact between company directors (from both SMEs and international groups), members of the European Commission, representatives of various authorities, universities and members of civil society. Many participants underlined the importance of the personal contacts they established in the corridors.

The theme of this first EBS was "innovation and creativity". UNICE, host of this summit together with our Belgian member, VBO-FEB, had chosen this theme because innovation and creativity are essential to strengthen the competitiveness of the European economy. But areas other than business also need a climate which is more favourable to innovation - research into new technologies, environmental protection, enlargement of the European Union, modernisation of social security - where development of innovation and creativity benefits society as a whole. The few hundred demonstrators against EBS fail to take this into account and believe - wrongly - that the European Commission is giving in to the interests of companies. 'The presence of nine members of the European Commission at EBS does not mean that it does not want to hold a similar dialogue with NGOs, on the contrary' said Romano Prodi, its President, at the end of EBS.

UNICE President Georges Jacobs made three recommendations that came out from the EBS-workshops: · Don't forget the dream dimension when you innovate; · Accept risk, failure is not the end of everything and encourage availability of venture capital; · Embrace continuous and accelerating change. These recommendations will first be refined and then submitted to European Commission President Prodi in the autumn. UNICE also intends to discuss the conclusions at European level with the other social partners. Mr. Jacobs added that innovation is not only the answer to the challenges of competitiveness but is also crucial in the social field (modernisation of European social protection systems), the environmental field (sustainable development and environmental protection) and in the political sphere (the enlargement of Europe).

Europe is not short of goods ideas and creativity, but lacks the courage needed to translate these ideas into practice. An observation made by, among others, Georges Ugeux, Vice President of the New York Stock Exchange. In addition, risk capital is lacking in Europe to contribute to the launch of economic projects. Moreover, Europe has a totally different vision of failure from that of the United States. 'In the United States, somebody who fails can still become a major entrepreneur; in Europe, he is treated with distrust' according to Commissioner Erkki Liikanen, who has called for a change of mentality.

At a time when one billion television viewers were watching the kick-off of Euro 2000 in Brussels, UNICE and VBO-FEB were pleased to profile Brussels and Belgium as the hub of European business. EBS in itself was a model of courage, innovation and creativity.

UNICE AT THE OECD CONFERENCE ON SMEs IN BOLOGNA

The OECD ministerial conference '**Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs in the global economy: strategies and policies**' took place in Bologna from 13 to 15 June 2000. The OECD conference brought more than 1300 participants together, including ministers and governmental delegates from 51 countries and almost 300 journalists from 40 countries.

A delegation of 26 representatives of UNICE and 11 Member Federations, including 8 SME entrepreneurs, was participating in this event delivering the views of the business community and UNICE's main messages on entrepreneurship and innovation to a wide political audience.

The main outcome of this high profile event was to bring the issue of the business environment for SMEs on the top of the political agenda for the first time on a very wide, international scale. The discussions were articulated around four main themes, incentives and capacities for innovation by SMEs, competitive advantage for SMEs of operating within clusters or inter-firm networks, barriers to SME adoption of internet-based electronic commerce, and challenges and opportunities of cross-border co-operation between SMEs in a globalised economy.

The Bologna Charter on SME policies has been adopted by the participating Ministers and representatives of governments. This document endorses most of the views delivered by the business community during the business symposium held on 13 June and results in a formal non binding document to be used in shaping future policies impacting on SMEs in the participating countries.

More information can be obtain through the UNICE secretariat or directly by visiting the official website at:

<http://www.smebolognaconference.org/servlet/News?cmd=newsTxt&nCodNews=89>

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

BENCHMARKING REPORT 2001: NEW ECONOMY

UNICE's Council of Presidents endorsed a proposal to carry out the next benchmarking report on the impact of the new economy. The project will be developed by the Competitiveness Working Group, which held its first meeting on 15 June 2000. It is to be completed in time for the special EU summit in March 2001 in Sweden, which will examine progress in implementing the Lisbon economic and structural reform action plan.

For any further information, please contact ecofin@unice.be

VAT: UNICE PREPARES REACTIONS

The Commission recently published two proposals: a strategy to improve the operation of the VAT system (COM(2000)348 final), and a proposal on VAT and e-commerce (COM(2000)349 final). Both documents are available on the Commission's DG TAXUD website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/taxation_customs/whatsnew.htm

The VAT group, whose next meeting is on 18 July 2000, will prepare reactions to both documents. The group has also sent the Commission an informal report on the 8th Directive, and is preparing an opinion on the Commission's work on invoicing.

For any further information, please contact ecofin@unice.be

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WORK IN PROGRESS

EMU: Next meeting 28 September 2000 will welcome Mr Bull, Director General of Statistics of the ECB

Fiscal Affairs: Next meeting will be held on 26 September 2000

VAT: next meetings 18 July and 26 September 2000

Competitiveness: Next meeting 7 September 2000

COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS

CONSUMER eCONFIDENCE THROUGH GLOBAL eGOVERNANCE

In a letter to the European Commission, dated 23 May 2000, co-signed by a dozen industry and trade federations, including UNICE, Eurocommerce, Eurochambre, FEDMA, TABD, and GBDe, European business welcomed the European Commission's interest in entering into joint discussions with e-commerce stakeholders on policies to enhance consumer e-confidence.

European business supports the suggestion of creating, under the chairmanship of the Commission, a high-level **tri-partite core group of political, business and consumer representatives**. It is felt that such a political core group would give the necessary impulse to speed up the e-confidence process, and lead to early conclusions.

Business believes that governments have an essential role to play in supporting and strengthening dialogue between e-commerce stakeholders, companies and consumers alike. The key issues of codes of conduct and trust marks, and of extra-judicial procedures, including principles applicable to out-of-court bodies, have been addressed in recent e-business dialogue meetings and should be the subject of more in-depth discussion and analysis.

Business therefore suggests that the European Commission proposes the creation of a number of expert working groups co-chaired by industry/trade and consumers to deal with relevant issues separately.

The European Commission already refers to *"establish a dialogue with industry and consumers as part of the development of the integrated framework for electronic commerce"* ("2000 Review of the Internal Market Strategy").

This tri-partite e-governance approach is in line with worldwide initiatives of partnerships between government, business, and civil society. Better European as well as global governance means greater participation, including e-business stakeholders.

This co-operative process of discernment and tri-partite partnership will also be the main theme of the **'State of the World Forum 2000'** convening global leaders of government, business, and of civil society parallel to the UN Summit beginning September 2000.

Building consumer e-confidence in Europe through tri-partnering e-governance corresponds to this global trend.

To obtain the full text of UNICE's 17 March preliminary comments, please visit:

[http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/82F304684CEFA773C12568B0004C4071/\\$File/Eu-domn.pdf](http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/82F304684CEFA773C12568B0004C4071/$File/Eu-domn.pdf)

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LEGAL AFFAIRS

REVISION OF THE EUROPEAN PATENT SYSTEM

Apart from intensive work in the context of the European Commission's new proposal seeking to create a Community patent, the Member States of the European Patent Organisation (EPO) are currently working on revision and improvement of the European patent system.

Further to the intergovernmental conference organised by France in June 1999, two working groups have been put in place to propose solutions to reduce the cost of European patents and improve the operation of the jurisdictional system.

The latest meeting of the working group on costs was held in Paris in April 2000 and most EPO Member States agreed to sign an agreement which would substantially reduce the number of translations required to validate a European patent in the various selected Member States. This is an important step in the right direction but further efforts are still needed.

Regarding the working group on jurisdictional arrangements, the possibility of creating a new centralised jurisdiction which would be competent for disputes linked to European patents is currently under discussion and Member States are seeking to reach agreement on a solution which would allow the largest number of them to sign it.

Thanks to its observer status on EPO's Administrative Council, UNICE has been able to participate in these two working groups as the spokesperson for industry. This position has given us the opportunity to exert a determinant influence on the direction of discussions.

The result of these two working groups should be confirmed officially at a second intergovernmental conference which it is expected will be organised by the United Kingdom in October 2000.

This intergovernmental conference will immediately precede a diplomatic conference whose purpose is to revise the European Patent Convention and which will be held in November 2000.

EXHAUSTION OF TRADEMARK RIGHTS: UNICE SUPPORTS BOLKESTEIN

On 25 May 2000, Ministers at the Internal Market Council discussed the issue of exhaustion of trademark rights. During this meeting Commissioner Bolkestein informed Member States that the Commission has decided not to propose a change to the current Community-wide exhaustion regime at this stage. This decision was very much welcomed by UNICE which has time and again explained why the current regime of Community exhaustion is crucial to maintain and protect EU competitiveness and innovation.

UNICE has evidenced that a move to an international exhaustion system would reduce the economic value of intellectual property rights and would place European companies at the competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis competitors from countries which do not apply this regime. The NERA study indicates that consumers would not benefit greatly from a move to international exhaustion since retail prices may decrease only by zero to two percent. On the other hand, the NERA study points out falls in profit for European companies of between three and thirty-five percent.

It remains UNICE's opinion that only an exhaustion regime limited to the territory of the European Union can provide a level of intellectual property protection needed by European companies.

UNICE will therefore continue to oppose international exhaustion as long as there is no single world market with a uniform commercial, economic and legal framework.

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STATE AID: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: UNICE COMMENTS

On 24 May 2000, UNICE issued preliminary comments on the Commission's draft guidelines on state aid for environmental protection. UNICE welcomes the Commission's initiative to define more clearly its policy towards state aid for environmental protection but has strong reservations regarding some elements of the draft guidelines. UNICE urges the Commission to take into account the specific nature of an existing or new national environmental tax measure, as well as its effects on the competitive position of the sectors concerned, when assessing the compatibility with the common market of a reduction or exemption from the tax in question.

To view the UNICE's comments, please visit:

[http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/E3634139B55242E0C12568E9004417F7/\\$File/Env_prot.pdf](http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/E3634139B55242E0C12568E9004417F7/$File/Env_prot.pdf)

STATE AID: MONITORING AND CONTROL: NEW PAPER COMING UP

UNICE is finalising a discussion paper on reinforcing state aid monitoring and control at national level. State aid in the EU remains very high and continues to distort competition. The discussion paper investigates how state aid control could be improved. While decentralisation of state aid control seems to be the current buzzword, UNICE stresses that the Commission must remain the key institution for effective implementation of state aid

controls. Increased efficiency of national courts is needed both in relation to the control of illegal aid and the enforcement of Commission decisions. UNICE argues that increased efficiency could be achieved through a remedies directive, improving and harmonising national court proceedings in relation to state aid within the EU, and the creation of specialised state aid courts.

COMPETITION: HORIZONTAL AGREEMENTS: SUPPORT BUT RESERVATIONS

On 23 May 2000, UNICE issued its comments on the Commission's draft block exemption regulation on R&D and specialisation agreements and the guidelines on horizontal co-operation. UNICE welcomes the Commission's efforts to develop a more economic approach in its assessment of horizontal agreements and is pleased that the Commission now proposes to allow companies greater contractual freedom for their co-operation, moving away from a clause-based approach. Despite its general support for the Commission's initiative, UNICE has some reservations regarding the new regulatory framework. UNICE is generally sceptical towards the principle of market share caps and would prefer the Commission to regulate not only R&D and specialisation agreements through directly applicable block exemption regulations but also other horizontal co-operation agreements which are now going to be dealt with by non-binding guidelines.

To view the position paper, please visit:

[http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/F40AB68DE59A5AB9C12568E900438B19/\\$File/81\(3\)ec.pdf](http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/F40AB68DE59A5AB9C12568E900438B19/$File/81(3)ec.pdf)

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WORK IN PROGRESS

Liability issues - Precautionary Principle

UNICE's informal *ad hoc* task force on the "Precautionary Principle", which has been set up to bring together the necessary expertise from the various policy areas involved to discuss the European Commission's Communication on the "Precautionary Principle", is preparing comments on the topic.

Accounting: Financial information

The European Commission has just adopted a long-awaited communication in connection with its action plan for financial services, in which it had announced its intention to update the EU's accounting strategy. The Commission proposes to generalise by 2005 the use by listed companies of IASC's international accounting standards. The communication also proposes creation of a community mechanism whose task would be to assess the compatibility of IAS standards with EU accounting rules. A legislative proposal should follow before year-end. UNICE's relevant working group will meet shortly to discuss these proposals and prepare comments.

The full text of the communication is available on the web site of DG Internal Market:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/en/company/account/news/com359en.pdf

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

UNICE PRESENTS ITS VIEWS ON FUTURE SOCIAL POLICY AGENDA

Shortly after the Lisbon European Council, the Commission started informal consultations on the content of the future EU social policy agenda. UNICE contribution to the definition of the new social policy agenda was communicated to the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council at the beginning of June. According to UNICE, the future social policy agenda should clearly place itself in the pursuit of the new strategic goal defined in Lisbon and rely primarily on the method and tools agreed by the European Council.

To obtain the full text, please visit:

[http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/D9EA3DF9503E7468C12569060049A65C/\\$File/Scopol-e.pdf](http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/D9EA3DF9503E7468C12569060049A65C/$File/Scopol-e.pdf)

HIGH-LEVEL FORUM EU INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL PARTNERS

As foreseen in the conclusions of the extraordinary meeting of the European Council in Lisbon, Prime Minister Guterres organised a high level meeting between the EU institutions and the social partners on 15 June. The aim of this meeting was to take stock of the implementation of the Lisbon conclusions on the eve of the European Council in Feira. Discussions revealed a strong backing for the programme of structural reforms defined in Lisbon. The role of social partners in labour market reform and training was strongly emphasised. In a joint declaration to the forum, UNICE, CEEP and ETUC recalled the actions they were undertaking in the context of the social dialogue to help the reform process.

To obtain the full text of the joint declaration, please visit:







[http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/E9C1402A75AC89EDC1256906004B1491/\\$File/Forum-e.pdf](http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/E9C1402A75AC89EDC1256906004B1491/$File/Forum-e.pdf)

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WORK IN PROGRESS

Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)

-  UNICE priorities in the field of OSH (contribution to the Commission action plan 2001/2005).
-  UNICE guidelines on OSH management systems
-  UNICE position paper on the proposal for a directive on physical agents (vibrations)
-  UNICE comments on the second list of indicative occupational exposure limit values
-  UNICE position on the reform of the Advisory Committee
-  UNICE comments on the proposed modification of the "asbestos" directive.

Industrial relations

-  UNICE's comments to the Commission's consultation on the proposed modification of Directive 80/987 concerning the protection of employees in the case of insolvency of their employer.

Education and training

UNICE's position paper on the proposal for a Recommendation on mobility of students, persons in training, young volunteers, teachers and trainers.

Equal opportunities

UNICE's position paper on the revision of Directive 76/207 on equal treatment between men and women as regards access to employment.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NEW BROCHURE ON INTEGRATED RESOURCE AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

At UNICE's seminar on "Moving towards sustainable resource and waste management" held on 28 March 2000, Ms Wallström, Commissioner for the environment, pointed out that: **"The issue of resource and waste management is of key importance in the context of the discussions on sustainable development. No need to say that in order to achieve a sustainable society – sustainable waste management is crucial."**

The UNICE seminar brought together top decision-makers from EU institutions, consumer and environmental NGOs and business representatives from across Europe, in order to assess and improve Europe's approach to waste and resource management.

UNICE has published comprehensive documentation about the discussion, presentations and all stakeholders' views on resource and waste management. For copies of the brochure please contact UNICE's documentation department (p.kettlewell@unice.be). All related documents can be downloaded (from 6th July on) at <http://unice.org/irwm.nsf/html+page/index.htm>

Further information please contact c.wolsdorff@unice.be

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PRIORITY WASTE STREAMS: NEW POSITION PAPER OUT

For several years the European Commission has been developing a number of initiatives aimed at managing so called "priority waste streams" such as: end-of-life vehicles, waste from electronic and electrical equipment, batteries and accumulators, packaging and packaging waste.

These initiatives incorporate a number of basic principles and horizontal approaches on which UNICE commented in its position paper dated 25 April 2000.

Following points of major concern for industry are discussed in the position:

- Restriction of recovery options

- Extension of producer responsibility for end-of-life products
- Ban on substances via waste legislation
- Introduction of retroactive liability
- No consideration of existing voluntary initiatives/negotiated agreements
- Lack of appropriate financial solutions for international trade.

To obtain the full text of UNICE's position paper, please visit :

[http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/F44C9058D8DE5F12C12568E80034FC46/\\$File/Wastream.pdf](http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/F44C9058D8DE5F12C12568E80034FC46/$File/Wastream.pdf)

WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE: INDUSTRY'S MAJOR CONCERNS

The proposal for a Water Framework Directive aiming to achieve good quality for all EU water resources entered the formal conciliation procedure between the European Parliament and Council in May 2000.

UNICE's Water Policy Working Group has prepared, in close co-operation with particularly concerned sectoral federations, e.g. CEFIC (chemical industries), Eurometaux (metals) and EFMA (fertiliser manufacturers), a briefing document on industry's major concerns regarding the proposed compromise text for a Water Framework Directive. Among other points, industry is concerned about the lack of definition for the terms "significant risk" and "unacceptable risk" as well the lack of indication of how "substances with unacceptable risk" will be identified.

Further information please contact Cynthia Wolsdorff c.wolsdorff@unice.be

UNICE CONCERNS OVER AIR QUALITY

At its meeting on 22/23 June the Environment Council will discuss the proposed directives on National Emission Ceilings and the revision of the Large Combustion Plant Directive.

UNICE's Air Quality Advocacy Group has sent a letter to the Committee of Permanent Representatives, expressing industry's strong concerns over the level of ambition which is being targeted by the European Commission's proposal on National Emission Ceilings. Further, UNICE strongly recommends that the scope of the revised Large Combustion Plant Directive should continue to allow flexibility for treatment of existing plant emissions within agreed national ceilings.

Further information please contact Cynthia Wolsdorff c.wolsdorff@unice.be

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CLIMATE CHANGE: LETTER TO WALLSTRÖM

UNICE has submitted its views on the main lines envisaged for preparation of the future European Climate Change Programme (ECCP) to Mrs Wallström and the Environment Council, with a view to the latter's meeting on 22 June. In addition, in the context of preparation of COP-6 in The Hague in November 2000, UNICE has presented its position

concerning definition of rules for the Kyoto mechanisms (in particular for joint implementation and the clean development mechanism).

To view the letter, please visit:

[http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/D3F8309C3DC717FBC125690D00526AA5/\\$File/Greengas.pdf](http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/D3F8309C3DC717FBC125690D00526AA5/$File/Greengas.pdf)

WORK IN PROGRESS

6th Environmental Action Programme

UNICE's Environment Working Group confirmed at its meeting on 10 May 2000 that the 6th Environmental Action Programme (6EAP) is a top priority. Members of the Working Group will develop UNICE's initial recommendations for the 6EAP, as outlined in the position paper dated on 6 April 2000 (see also UNICE@news edition in May 2000), and take a proactive approach towards the structure and concept of the 6EAP. UNICE will continue its close contacts and co-operation with the respective Commission services which plans to issue a proposal for the 6EAP in autumn 2000.

To see the full text of the recommendations on the web site:

[http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/CBC5FFAC20E79F29C12568C0005A099F/\\$File/6envsust.pdf](http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/CBC5FFAC20E79F29C12568C0005A099F/$File/6envsust.pdf)

Integrated Pollution Prevention Control (IPPC)

The European IPPC Bureau held the kick-off meeting of the Technical Working Group on the horizontal reference document "Economic Aspects and Cross Media" on 25/26 May 2000. UNICE, as official focal point for industry representatives in IPPC Technical Working Groups, headed a group of 13 industry experts from various sectors. Economic and cross-media issues are considered key issues for the permitting of installations according to IPPC Directive 96/61/EC, with a view to attempting to take into consideration the costs and benefits of protecting the environment as a whole, which means trying to balance the impacts on the environment of the techniques used for the various environmental media.

The various sectoral industry federations involved in UNICE's IPPC Working Group will co-operate closely and take over their share of co-ordination work in the preparation and drafting of this horizontal reference document in next year or two.

For further information please contact Cynthia Wolsdorff (c.wolsdorff@unice.be).

Environmental liability

UNICE's environmental affairs team is helping to gather the data and input needed for UNICE's activities on that issue from environmental experts. The issue is managed by UNICE's Company Affairs Department.

For further information please contact Erik Berggren (e.berggren@unice.be).

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EXTERNAL RELATIONS

THE VOICE OF BUSINESS IN EUROPE

Rue Joseph II, 40 - box 4 - B-1000 Brussels - Tel: (322) 237 65 11 - Fax: (322) 231 14 45

EU-US TRADE DISPUTES

UNICE is very concerned by the carousel provisions signed into US law last month which require the United States Representative (USTR) to make periodic revisions of retaliation lists where a WTO member fails to comply with the results of dispute settlement proceedings. This means that, in the bananas and beef hormones cases, all EU goods are threatened by punitive tariffs, thus increasing uncertainty for European companies which have nothing to do with the cases. In addition, this new approach to retaliation is likely to aggravate Transatlantic tensions. Therefore, UNICE calls on both sides to intensify their efforts to find WTO-compatible solutions rapidly for pending cases. For UNICE, compensation payments or the imposition of sanctions are not satisfactory alternatives to implementation as it is generally industry which ultimately pays the price of non-compliance with WTO rules.

COMMISSION DIALOGUE WITH NGOS ON TRADE ISSUES

The second meetings of the issue groups on health issues, agriculture, services and sustainable development and environment will be organised on 26 June (first two) and 27 June (second two). At the first meetings, which took place on 29-30 May, the format and procedural aspects were discussed and the issues for further discussion identified. Participants were invited to table written submission in advance of the meetings. The issues provisionally selected for the next rolling programme are: transparency, investment, competition and regionalism.

For more information please consult the Commission website:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/trade>

UNICE POST-SEATTLE POSITIONS

UNICE continues to support the launch of a new comprehensive round of WTO multilateral trade negotiations as soon as possible. A small UNICE delegation conveyed that message to the WTO Director General, Mike Moore, and a number of key actors in Geneva on 19 June. To pursue the dialogue with government and business representatives from developed and developing countries on all the business-related issues currently discussed in Geneva, UNICE is revisiting its positions adopted before Seattle in the light of the new environment. Two have been finalised on investment and market access.

On investment, UNICE reaffirms its support for the launch of negotiations in the framework of the WTO. It considers that appropriate multilateral provisions on fdi will be in the interest of all WTO members at all stages of development. The objective of such an agreement would be to ensure transparency of existing investment regimes, improve protection of investments and prepare the basis for a future liberalisation.

On market access, UNICE considers of utmost importance that all tariff reductions, either general or sectoral, are accompanied by significant progress in the area of non-tariff barriers and become part of a single undertaking at the end of the round. It also confirms its views regarding tariff dismantling for least developed countries, tariff peaks, small tariffs, non-tariff measures and implementation of existing WTO agreements. It underlines also the conditions any sectoral tariff agreement must fulfil.

For the full transcript of these two positions, please visit:

[http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/99B6CE6576C7DCA8C1256906004C494A/\\$File/Inveswto.pdf](http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/99B6CE6576C7DCA8C1256906004C494A/$File/Inveswto.pdf)
[http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/54A924CF2CE46053C1256906004D3F42/\\$File/Mkacc-e.pdf](http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/54A924CF2CE46053C1256906004D3F42/$File/Mkacc-e.pdf)

UNICE STATEMENT ON EU-INDIA SUMMIT

UNICE warmly welcomes the forthcoming first EU-India Summit in Lisbon and supports the various initiatives to enhance co-operation between the EU and India. It looks forward to playing an increasing role in dialogue with India's Government and business community in order to ensure progress on subjects such as trade and investment liberalisation. UNICE very much hopes that the Indian government will be willing to give its full support to the launch of a new comprehensive round of negotiations as soon as possible.

To view the statement, please visit:

[http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/40070146AFDDB770C125690D0051CCC9/\\$File/India.pdf](http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/40070146AFDDB770C125690D0051CCC9/$File/India.pdf)

IV EURO-MEDITERRANEAN INDUSTRIAL SUMMIT

The IV Euro-Mediterranean Business Summit that took place in Tunis on 12 and 13 May was a great success. More than 100 business people and government representatives from the Euro-Mediterranean area attended that meeting. They expressed the need to give higher visibility to the Barcelona process and to explain to public opinion the benefits to be gained from this process by both sides. Specific provisions to improve investments and SME financing were identified. In Tunis, important steps were taken to increase cooperation between business federations from both sides of the Mediterranean, with the official launch of UNICE's UNIMED Business Network and the decision by the South Mediterranean federations present to create a South Mediterranean regional business organisation.

For the full transcript of the final statement please consult:

[http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/91DDAC053A22C1F2C1256906004DAB81/\\$File/Tunis-e.pdf](http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/91DDAC053A22C1F2C1256906004DAB81/$File/Tunis-e.pdf)

WORK IN PROGRESS

- ✍ Update of UNICE positions on WTO issues
- ✍ UNICE positions on Japan
- ✍ UNICE positions on China
- ✍ UNICE Statement on India
- ✍ Update of UNICE positions on EU enlargement
- ✍ Preparation of 1st EU-Latin America Business Summit in Madrid (20-21 November)
- ✍ White Paper on the rationale of export controls on dual-use goods.

BUSINESS SERVICES

RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT: KEY THEMES

In view of the 15 June Research Council, UNICE has sent the Commission and Council a list of key themes for consideration in preparation of the 6th EU RTD framework programme.

This document covers the objectives of the framework programme, the key elements of its content and recommendations regarding its structure and management. UNICE has also sent the Commission and Council a detailed additional contribution on the communication "Towards a European research area".

To view the document, please visit:

[http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/9BF35BEB36B44720C1256906004778D9/\\$File/6-rtdfp.pdf](http://www.unice.org/unice/docum.nsf/all+by+description/9BF35BEB36B44720C1256906004778D9/$File/6-rtdfp.pdf)

YOUR OPINION ?

Your comments and/or suggestions are welcome. Please do not hesitate to e-mail them to our Communication Department at <mailto:communications@unice.be>. For more information about UNICE and its member federations, consult UNICE's web site at www.unice.org.

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