

Mr Guy Verhofstadt
General services of the Prime Minister
16, rue de la Loi
1000 Bruxelles

Brussels, 15 October 2001

THE PRESIDENT

Dear Prime Minister,

In my capacity as President of the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE), I would like to share with you our main concerns in view of the European summit to be held in Ghent which will give priority to addressing the consequences of the terrorist attacks in the United States and the future of Europe.

At the present time, the economic cost of the tragic events in the United States cannot be estimated with any reliability. The fundamentals of the American and European economies have not been changed by the events. The main task now is to maintain consumer confidence. Everyone must play their part, and European business is prepared to accept its responsibilities.

In this context, it is all the more important to strengthen Europe in a more global economy. European integration is evolving rapidly and strongly. In three months the single currency will be a tangible reality for companies and for most citizens. In three years the European Union is set to expand with a large number of new Member States. By 2010 Europe has undertaken to complete major economic and structural reforms to become the most competitive region in the world.

On the eve of the Ghent summit, UNICE calls for consolidation of these achievements, and for real progress in three highly specific areas.

- **A more secure Europe**

Creation of single area must not give free rein to terrorism, violence and commercial or financial delinquency. Europe must also be able to deploy its full weight on the international stage in the areas of monetary, trade, economic, social and environment policy.

In order to meet these challenges, European companies need effective European institutions. They call for a secure European area in which open competition is assured, allowing them to increase their strength in the context of a more global economy.

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- **A simpler Europe**

Rules must be simplified, better applied, effective and predictable. To that end, policies for regulatory and administrative simplification must be pursued at the level of both Europe and Member States. It is important to involve social and economic circles in this endeavour.

- **A less distant Europe**

Above all, Europe must draw support from the constituent living forces of society. For us business people, it is essential that the construction of Europe encourages the spirit of initiative and free enterprise. Europe does not necessarily need more rules, it also has an interest in developing other forms of management such as open cooperation and self-regulation, which offers a greater guarantee that objectives will be met.

That is our appeal to the Ghent summit for a more competitive and more effective Europe, which requires a democratic, transparent and simple institutional system. It is essential to consolidate European integration without enshrining competences in a rigid Treaty which could no longer respond to the challenges of the moment.

Now more than ever, maintaining peace and prosperity in Europe remains the principal objective of European integration. To that end, the principal goals should be completion of the internal market, promotion of entrepreneurship, and successful enlargement, which has the full support of the business community in both existing EU Member States and the candidate countries.

Yours sincerely,

Original signed by
Georges Jacobs