

4th WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

European Business welcomes new trade negotiations

Doha 14 November, 2001 – UNICE and ESF welcome today's results in Doha. After a full week of tough discussions, European business' main objective, namely the launch of a new WTO broad-based round of negotiations to be concluded in three years, has been agreed. In the current climate of economic and political uncertainty, this decision is a significant step towards restoring confidence in the multilateral system and strengthening international economic governance. The package meets several of the priorities we have been actively pursuing since the Seattle failure.

The new round opens the way for negotiations leading to further improvements in market access for goods and services. It will also enable further enhancement and clarification of existing WTO rules, notably on intellectual property, anti-dumping, subsidies and dispute settlement, and thus prevents and reduces potential damaging trade conflicts.

We welcome the decision that negotiations will take place on Trade and Environment, although we would have preferred them to have wider scope.

As regards developing and least developed countries, the Ministerial Declaration, together with the specific implementation measures adopted in Doha, significantly and effectively addresses the interests of these countries and enhances their integration into the multilateral trading system and the global economy. The separate Declaration on the TRIPs Agreement and Public Health recognises that the TRIPs Agreement is flexible enough to take account of public health concerns and that intellectual property protection is vital for the development of new medicines.

European business is, however, disappointed by the postponement of the start of negotiations on investment, trade facilitation and transparency in government procurement, which are all essential for the development of international trade. It hopes that modalities of negotiations will be indeed settled at the fifth Ministerial WTO Conference so that negotiations can go ahead promptly.

In addition, Doha will be remembered for the historic signing of the accession agreements with the People's Republic of China and Chinese Taipei, which bring a quarter of the world's population under the multilateral rules-based system.

European business looks forward to contributing constructively to the negotiations now under way.

UNICE is the official voice of more than 16 million small, medium and large companies active in Europe, employing over 106 million people. Active in European affairs since 1958, UNICE's members are 33 central industrial and employers federations from 26 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe.

The European Services Forum comprises 46 major European service companies, represented by their CEOs in the European Service Leaders Group (ESLG, see members below) and 35 European service federations, representing 22 services sectors. It represents the very large majority of the European service industries that have a direct interest in supplying international services.

For more information, please visit UNICE's WTO website on: <http://wto.unice.org> and ESF website on: www.esf.be

For further information, please contact:

Monique Julien :	+32(0)2 237 65 22
Susanne Klunkert :	+32(0)2 237 65 62
Pascal Kerneis :	+32(0)2 230 75 14