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**WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM – EXPECTATIONS FROM THE
EUROPEAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

“The World Economic Forum this year can play an important role in giving business - and society at large - input for finding new directions. New directions are needed in light of the economic situation, the fact that globalisation and anti-globalisation supporters are clashing more frequently, and the fundamental debate has not yet moved into full swing.

After the successful introduction of the euro in Europe, European business now expects EU governments to show political will to go ahead with economic and structural reforms. These reforms are essential to boost Europe’s economic potential in a global business environment. So is completion of the internal market among EU member states. More progress is needed, and the World Economic Forum could not take place at a better time. It allows us to discuss our own economic and legal framework within a global context. We need to ask ourselves what and where Europe needs to improve in order to benefit from its assets in comparison and in competition with other trading nations world-wide.

The World Economic Forum therefore provides for the opportunity to discuss the economic situation prior to the crucial EU spring summit to be held in Barcelona in March. At that summit, heads of state and government of the 15 EU member states will have to decide what steps are to be taken in order to achieve their goal: to make Europe the world's most competitive economic region by 2010," says Philippe de Buck, Secretary General of UNICE.

Note to the editor:

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 34 central industrial and employers federations from 27 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe.

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