



21 February 2002

MAKE BARCELONA A SUCCESS

With the Barcelona Summit drawing near, the organisations representing Europe's business community have joined forces for the first time to urge all 15 heads of state and government that they must now deliver on their commitment to achieving a competitive Europe. In today's press conference all Secretaries General of the major European business associations* called on national governments to meet the targets they set themselves in Lisbon and to deliver the urgently needed reforms. To convey their message, they have sent a jointly signed letter to all 15 government leaders, warning that "without rapid structural reforms, including in the labour market, the EU cannot achieve consistent high growth, and will not be able to create sustainable jobs and prosperity for its citizens." This joint initiative complements the separate contributions to Barcelona of the four associations.

In today's press conference, the European business community pointed to neglected "homework": deadlines set in Lisbon have been missed. The lack of liberalisation of the energy markets is one example. "We are very concerned that the ambitious Lisbon targets are not matched by the willingness to carry out difficult structural reforms in key markets," said Philippe de Buck, Secretary General of UNICE. "If the EU is to convert its potential into performance, now is the time for actions. Europe is falling back in terms of growth and productivity in relation to the US. It is of utmost importance to increase the attractiveness of Europe, as a location for enterprise and investment" added his counterpart, Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES.

"We are concerned about the general orientation of European debates on sustainability, corporate social responsibility and new governance", explained Xavier Durieu, Secretary General of EUROCOMMERCE. "The role and the importance of business development as a prerequisite has to be recognised in these debates."

"The Barcelona summit is the opportunity for member states to make clear their commitment to really shaping Europe into the most competitive economic region in the world. Progress should no longer be hindered by national egoism, which is costly for Europe's economy and society," appealed Hans Werner Müller, Secretary General of UEAPME.

For further information, please contact:

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|-----------------------|---------------------------|--|
| ▪ <i>Eurochambres</i> | Catherine Bourdeau | +32 (0)2 282 08 56
www.eurochambres.be |
| ▪ <i>Eurocommerce</i> | Christelle Maes | +32 (0)2 737 05 82
www.eurocommerce.be |
| ▪ <i>UEAPME</i> | Gerhard Huemer | +32 (0)2 285 07 19
www.ueapme.com |
| ▪ <i>UNICE</i> | Susanne Klunkert | +32 (0) 237 65 62
www.unice.org |

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EUROCHAMBRES

Created in 1958, the same year as the birth of the European Communities, EUROCHAMBRES is the Brussels-based Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry. With members from 36 National Chamber organisations, including the 15 EU Member States and the candidate countries, EUROCHAMBRES is part of an institutional network, ultimately including 15,000,000 European businesses. With a multi-sectorial membership of businesses, EUROCHAMBRES is the only body that serves the interests of every sector - and every size - of European business. It is the largest single business representation in Europe.

As the key player in a vast network of businesses and Chambers of Commerce and Industry, EUROCHAMBRES works hand in hand with all European Institutions in promoting a positive, competitive, pro-business environment. Our network of more than 1,500 Chambers, which are the national and local voices of European businesses, provides EUROCHAMBRES with the representativeness and means to fulfil our mission to influence European legislation in a constructive manner. In this way, EUROCHAMBRES seeks to play a key role in the formulation of European Union policies.

EUROCOMMERCE

Created in 1993, EuroCommerce is the Retail, Wholesale and International Trade representation to the European Union. With more than 100 members from 24 European Countries, EuroCommerce, as the trade representation to the EU institutions is recognised as a sectoral Social partner and defends the common interests of its members at EU level and keeps them informed on European dossiers that impact their activities. It is the objective of the 4.7 million of enterprises active in the Commerce sector to create welfare for their total of 22.5 million employees while meeting the needs and expectations of over 370 millions consumers in the Internal market.

UEAPME

UEAPME is the employer's organisation representing the interests, at European level, of crafts, trades and SME's in the European Union and countries applying for accession to the European Union. It is a non-profit seeking and non-partisan.

Its 70 member organisations, as of December 2001, consist of national cross-sectorial federations, European branch federations and other associate members which support the SME family. Of the 19 million enterprises in the European Union, UEAPME represents more than 7 million which employ over 30 million people. Across the whole of Europe, UEAPME represents over 10 million enterprises with nearly 50 million employees.

More about UEAPME (Union Européenne des Artisanats et des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises):
www.ueapme.com

UNICE

UNICE is the official voice, vis-à-vis the institutions of the European Union, of the more than 16 million small, medium and large companies active in Europe today.

These companies employ a total of more than 106 million people. They generate the resources which are the basis for the well-being and living standards of society. Employment in Europe depends largely on their success.

Created in 1958, UNICE's membership now consists of 34 central industrial and employers' federations from 27 European countries.

Its priority mission is to ensure that common interests of the companies it represents are heard, understood and taken into account.

UNICE is a social partner and its role is enshrined in the Treaty establishing the European Community.