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**UNICE WELCOMES A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION TO COMBAT  
CYBERCRIME**

UNICE welcomes the European Commission's proposal for a Council Framework Decision on attacks against information systems, dated 19 April 2002, as a step towards concrete measures to combat cybercrime in the European Union.

Cybercrime is a very significant threat to business investment in information systems. A recent Eurostat study reveals that lack of security is considered by 62% of small and medium-sized enterprises and 81% of large enterprises as the main barrier to their use of the Internet.

In this context UNICE welcomes initiatives aiming at the creation of a safer information society by improving the security of information infrastructures and combating computer-related crime.

The Commission's proposal, in seeking to harmonise cybercrime offences such as *hacking, viruses and denial of services*, will help the 15 Member States' criminal laws to provide a common response in an area of criminal activity which, by nature, knows no borders.

Harmonisation of laws should improve police and judicial cooperation: if the same activity is considered an offence in all 15 Member States, criminals will no longer be able to find safe havens in EU Member States.

UNICE will closely follow this proposal and other initiatives to combat cybercrime, an issue which is of utmost importance for industry.

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.