

Brussels, 8 July 2002

**A STRONG AND COMPETITIVE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY FOR EUROPE: POLITICAL DECISIONS NOW**

UNICE, the voice of business in Europe, has presented a battery of measures that will lead to a strong and competitive European industry, for the special occasion of the Seminar on Strengthening EU industrial Competitiveness Policy to be attended by all Commissioners on July 10.

European business welcomes this initiative which is coherent with the Lisbon commitment to make Europe the most dynamic and competitive area in the world by 2010.

The EU is the world's largest trading entity accounting for around 20% of global merchandise exports and 18% of total world imports. European manufacturing industry generates employment for a large diversified workforce, from those with elementary skills to those with highly sophisticated qualifications. It is crucial to preserve a dynamic internationally competitive European industrial base.

UNICE has identified six priorities: entrepreneurship, technological innovation, human resources (competences and skills), basic infrastructures of the economy, companies' contribution to ecological progress and access to international markets under fair conditions of international competition.

*"Undertaking complex but needed structural reforms as well as encouraging investment in new products is a must if we want European companies to reinforce their position in Europe and to grow beyond our borders"* says Philippe de Buck, UNICE's Secretary General.

In particular, UNICE expects political decisions that lead to:

- Strengthening coherence and efficiency of EU environmental measures to provide a clearer frame for companies' actions,
- Identifying solutions for the skilled labour shortage which threatens industrial progress,
- Improving the impact assessment of EU drafts by accelerating the implementation of the new procedures announced by the European Commission.

**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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