

9 May 2003

**PRESENTATION BY MR GEORGES JACOBS  
PRESIDENT OF UNICE  
PLENARY SESSION OF THE CONVENTION  
15 MAY 2003**

Thank you Mr President,

Dear Conventioneers,

The smooth functioning of the institutions in a Europe of twenty-five or more will be the key for its success and this will only be possible if the reform of its institutional framework enables it to pursue its integration. In this regard, Europe needs to be able to act rapidly and efficiently.

In this context, UNICE has always spoken out firmly in favour of defending the Community method, centred on a fully independent and strong Commission with an exclusive right to initiate legislation, complemented by the co-decision procedure. This is indispensable to guarantee the cohesion and effectiveness of Community actions.

On this subject, UNICE believes that the formulation of article 18, on the European Commission, inadequately reflects the dimension that must be assigned to the Commission and that the wording of its paragraph 2 in particular has to be reviewed.

We have proposed an amendment to that end, such that the current formulation would be replaced by the following:

“The Commission has an exclusive right of initiative for legislative action excluding exceptions expressly provided for in the treaty.”

UNICE also believes that article 18 should make reference to the fact that the Commission proposes the Union’s annual and multi-annual work programme.

We regard these amendments as necessary to ensure the pivotal role of the Commission in the institutional triangle.

Lastly, it is important that the mixed portfolio of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (foreign policy, external relations and coordination of the Union’s external action) does not lead in practice to a weakening of the Union’s capacity to act and vigorously defend the Union’s interests in the field of the common commercial policy and investment.