

Brussels, 21 May 2003

**SIX BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS CALL ON THE LEADERS OF THE G8 TO USE THE EVIAN
SUMMIT TO BOLSTER WTO MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS**

GLOBAL ECONOMIC GROWTH AT RISK

The European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT) and the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE) are joined by four other international business organisations in a letter to the Group of Eight (G8) Summit leaders urging a strong commitment to the WTO Round 2005 target completion date.

BRUSSELS – UNICE and ERT, together with four other international business groups, called on the European and other G8 leaders for a strong commitment to the success of the multilateral WTO trade negotiations in the framework of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) at Evian on 1 June 2003. Stalling negotiations would put worldwide economic growth at risk.

"This is the right time and the right opportunity to reassert the importance of multilateral solutions to shared problems. Further trade liberalisation is essential to strengthen Europe's competitiveness and would spur global economic growth", said Gerhard Cromme, Chairman of the European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT).

Georges Jacobs, President of UNICE, underlined *"At a time of great economic uncertainty, multilateral cooperation on trade and investment is more necessary than ever. European companies expect the September WTO Ministerial in Cancun to take the decisions necessary to clear the way and inject new momentum for the final phase of the DDA negotiations in the interest of all the parties concerned"*.

The letter marks the start of an international communication campaign, by leading business organisations from around the world, to ensure the Doha Development Agenda negotiations remain on track. The other groups joining with UNICE and ERT in signing the letter are the US Business Roundtable (BRT), the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, the International Chamber of Commerce, and Nippon Keidanren.

The text of the letter is attached.

Note to the Editor

UNICE represents 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 35 central industrial and employers federations from 28 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe.

The European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT) is a forum of around 45 leaders of large internationally operating companies of European parentage. Its "core" mission is to promote the competitiveness of European industry in international markets. It expresses views on those areas most connected to its own interest and expertise, chiefly major developments which may affect the conditions essential to providing the proper environment for successful business operation. Companies of ERT Members cover a wide range of industry sectors. Their combined turnover is €1,400 billion and they employ around 4 million people worldwide.

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