

Brussels, 13 June 2003

UNICE REACTION TO FINAL DRAFT OF THE CONVENTION

The President of UNICE Georges Jacobs has participated as an observer during the fifteen months that the Convention has lasted, contributing actively at the level of both plenary sessions and working groups. For the first time at EU level, a democratic review of the Treaty has taken place, in which national governments, national parliaments, the European Parliament, social partners and representatives of organised civil society are represented. This strengthens the democratic dimension of the EU and is very much welcomed by business. The Convention is clearly a precedent for the future revision of treaties that marks an important development for the EU and should be taken as a reference.

UNICE supports the final draft presented to members of the Convention by President Giscard d'Estaing on Friday 13 June. The outcome of the Convention is a good basis to allow further integration of Europe and for business to develop and prosper in the European Union. The Convention has made an historic contribution to EU integration.

The draft Treaty that is on the table should allow the EU to be more transparent, more competitive, and closer to its citizens.

The final text represents a satisfactory balance between economic and social aspects. UNICE has devoted a great deal of effort in particular to ensuring that a reference to a high level of competitiveness was included in the Treaty article 3 (highly competitive EU) and is particularly happy about the fact the Convention has responded positively to its request, and by so doing has recognised that competitiveness is necessary to ensure social progress.

UNICE also very much welcomes the fact that the Convention has given a positive answer to its request to have official recognition of the nature and role of social partners and social dialogue in the constitutional part of the Treaty.

Lastly, UNICE supports the Convention's request to have additional time to fine-tune part III of the draft Treaty. Convention members and Praesidium deserve warm congratulations on their work.