

Brussels, 30 June 2003

**DR JÜRGEN STRUBE - NEW PRESIDENT OF UNICE**

After a record period of five years, Baron Georges Jacobs today stands down as President of UNICE. He had previously held the position of Vice-President of UNICE for four years, representing almost a decade of active commitment to European business. His successor is Dr Jürgen Strube who has spent his professional career with the German chemicals group BASF, of which he is currently Chairman of the Supervisory Board. He will be UNICE's President for an initial mandate of two years.

Baron Jacobs, Chairman of the Executive Board of UCB, has piloted Europe's leading business organisation through some of the most momentous developments in European integration, including the reality of the single market since 1 January 1993, introduction of the single currency in twelve EU Member States and the imminent enlargement to include ten new Member States from the former eastern bloc and the Mediterranean. The last ten years have also seen enshrinement of the social dialogue in the Maastricht treaty, which allows employers and trade unions to negotiate agreements autonomously. This approach has been a success, and has resulted in a number of negotiated agreements in the field of social policy. As Baron Jacobs hands over the reins, EU Member States are preparing to discuss and eventually ratify the new constitutional treaty.

Dr Strube was born in Bochum in 1939 and, having gained a doctorate in law, joined BASF in 1969. After periods spent working for BASF operations in, *inter alia*, Brazil and the United States, he was appointed Chairman of the Board of Executive Directors in 1990. Relinquishing this position in May of this year, he continues to serve BASF as Chairman of its Supervisory Board. He also sits on the Supervisory Boards of a number of other leading companies.

Dr Strube's priorities for his Presidency fall into five broad categories:

- **Competitiveness**: Business will keep up the pressure on EU Member States to make real and rapid progress towards meeting the competitiveness objective agreed in Lisbon three years ago. Related to this, it is also essential that Europe enhances its research efforts and puts in place the right framework for successful innovation, the key to tomorrow's prosperity and jobs.
- **Trade and external relations**: Trade and foreign direct investment are stagnating. The Doha trade talks must be accelerated to give a new impetus to liberalisation. An improvement in transatlantic relations is also necessary. Dr Strube has a strong personal commitment to revival of the Trans-Atlantic Business Dialogue (TABD).
- **Industrial Policy**: A coherent and sustainable industrial policy is key to achieving the Lisbon goals. A new industrial policy must ensure a favourable framework within which industry can flourish and improve its competitiveness, but without governmental interventionism.
- **Better regulation**: Regulation must be made more business-friendly through a reduction in excessive red tape, independent impact assessment of business-relevant initiatives and allowing industry a greater say in the way it is regulated. Environmental policy is an example.

➤ **Social Dialogue:** The specific role of social partners is now covered in a separate article in the first part of the new Constitution. This reference recognises the specific role that social partners play in economic and social governance in all European countries. The European social partners have agreed on a work programme, to be carried out over the years 2003, 2004 and 2005. This programme is grouped – in the context of the Lisbon strategy – around three major priorities: employment, mobility and enlargement. UNICE will also attach importance to handling those issues on a more autonomous basis.

UNICE takes this opportunity to thank Baron Jacobs warmly for his many years of valuable service, and to wish him every success in his future activities. At the same time, UNICE is delighted to welcome Dr Strube as its new President, and looks forward to working with him towards the European business community's goal of a competitive economy which will increase the well-being of society as a whole.

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