

**The role of the Competitiveness Council**

**UNICE comments**

The Competitiveness Council was created out of a merger between the former Internal Market, Industry and Research Councils, in an effort to reduce the number of Council configurations. But in addition, the Competitiveness Council is endowed with a **special mandate**, which was formally given to it by Heads of State and Government at the Spring Summit three months ago. It says that **the Competitiveness Council must actively assume its role of enhancing competitiveness and growth**, by watching over all proposals considered likely to have an effect on Europe's competitiveness.

Now the Competitiveness Council must live up to this role. It must develop the stature to turn a credible spotlight on inadequacies standing in the way of Europe's stated goal of competitiveness. Therefore **UNICE warmly welcomes the effort made by the Italian Presidency to make the work of the Competitiveness Council more effective and efficient**, in particular by focusing on the interaction with other Council formations and on integration of the manifold items on the Council's agenda.

- The European business community considers it crucial that the **Competitiveness Council gains a genuine competence** on dossiers relevant for competitiveness together with the Council formation regularly in charge of the dossier.
- It must be able to evaluate and influence initiatives from a competitiveness point of view, particularly those **that could hamper European competitiveness**. European business considers the current **compromise on the Community Patent**, the Directive on **Temporary Agency Work** and in particular the **Chemicals Legislation Package** to be test cases of how seriously the competitiveness goal is treated in the EU.
- In line with the new industrial policy outlined in the Commission's Communication "Industrial policy in an enlarged Europe", competitiveness assessments must give **particular attention to the European industrial sector**.
- The Competitiveness Council's conclusions must give **clear and unambiguous statements** commensurate with the Competitiveness Council's authority.

In this regard, UNICE and its member federations call on national governments to **reflect the new competences of the Competitiveness Council also at national level**.

Only if these conditions are met can the Competitiveness Council become a standard-bearer for the vision set out in the Lisbon strategy, to make Europe the most competitive economy by 2010.

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