

Brussels, 15 September 2003

**EUROPEAN BUSINESS ON SERVICES OF GENERAL INTEREST:  
"IT AIN'T BROKE SO DON'T FIX IT!"**

European business is seriously concerned by some interventionist positions, being developed in the public debate on Services of General Interest (SGI). In its response to the Commission consultation on the Green Paper on Services of General Interest, published today, UNICE points out that the existing basic provisions on Services of General Interest are sufficient and must not be changed. The introduction of a framework directive or other horizontal legislation would be counterproductive in that area.

Services of General Interest are essential for the well-being of European citizens as well as for strengthening Europe's competitiveness in line with the Lisbon strategy. Increased competition in SGI has led to remarkable - and proven - progress in the provision of these services. Sectoral directives focused on specific issues have strongly contributed to this result.

*"We do not need a new code of universal and centralistic rules in order to promote SGI" said UNICE Secretary General Philippe de Buck. "It is essential to leave the Treaty unchanged and retain the current regulation model, which constitutes a solid base for achieving society's objectives for SGI and competitiveness."*

The envisaged regulatory work would be totally counterproductive. Such general rules would be:

1. **unworkable**, bearing in mind the great diversity of SGI;
  2. **unnecessary**, given the major progress made in the field of SGI over the last ten years;
- and
3. **highly damaging for economic and social development**, as it would stop progress and renovation in the field of SGI. It would also trigger a backward movement through reactivation of protectionist influences, as well as re-introduction of obstacles to competition and private entrepreneurial dynamism.

European institutions and Member States are urged not to modify the provisions of the current Treaty applicable to SGI, and not to introduce a framework directive or other horizontal legislation in this area.

The UNICE position paper on SGI is available on the UNICE website at [www.unice.org](http://www.unice.org)

Note to the editor:

UNICE speaks on behalf of 16 million small, medium and large companies active in Europe. 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.