

Brussels, 26 March 2004

UNICE COMMENTS ON THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE SPRING SUMMIT

The Irish Presidency has made a great and successful effort in preparing the Spring Summit. As a result the conclusions strike the right note regarding the urgency and necessary commitment to the Lisbon Strategy. Heads of State and Government must now deliver back home.

The European Council has acknowledged entrepreneurship as a defining condition for growth. However, UNICE regrets that the Heads of State and Government did not commit to the European Agenda for entrepreneurship they asked for one year ago.

Heads of State and Government have called for a cost-benefit analysis on climate change issues. This is an important first step that should lead to a review of the EU climate change policy if necessary.

On the key issue of better regulation, business endorses three concrete actions proposed by the European Council: 1) enhancing the competitiveness dimension through integrated impact assessments, 2) implementing national regulatory reforms by the Member States, and 3) setting the deadline of November 2004 for assessing progress on efforts to streamline regulations.

Finally, UNICE strongly supports the creation of a high-level group, chaired by Wim Kok, that will carry out the Lisbon strategy mid-term review in 2005.

Philippe de Buck, Secretary General of UNICE: *“Now, we need to turn paper conclusions into action. Meeting the Lisbon objectives means generating more jobs and prosperity for European citizens and, as a consequence, improving public acceptance of the EU – which, ahead of enlargement and a new Constitution, it could certainly do with”.*

Note to the editor:

UNICE represents more than 16 million small, medium and large companies active in Europe. Active in European affairs since 1958, UNICE’s members are 36 central industrial and employers federations from 29 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe.