

21 June 2004

**EUROPEAN COUNCIL ON 17-18 JUNE:
UNICE'S REACTION**

UNICE applauds the adoption by the European Council of a **new Constitutional Treaty**. It provides the basis to:

- strengthen European competitiveness, adaptability to structural change and employment prospects;
- strengthen Europe's economies and fully realise EMU's potential;
- successfully enlarge the EU without any distortion of the Internal Market
- strengthen Europe's economic power on the international stage.

Philippe de Buck: *"We have witnessed a very important step in the on-going construction of the EU. However, the record low voter turnout in the elections to the European Parliament one week ago proved that the European Union has to strengthen its communication efforts. We need a Europe-wide communication strategy to inform citizens about the advantages of the European Union"*

UNICE regrets that an agreement on the **new President of the Commission** could not be reached. A quick decision is important for the credibility of the EU institutions at this particular time. UNICE hopes that the nomination of the new President of the Commission takes place before the Irish presidency ends on 30 June.

The new Commission President and the Commissioners must make a real commitment to economic reform and implementation of the Lisbon agenda. The lack of interest among the broad public for European affairs makes it indispensable that the new President of the Commission shows strong communications skills and is able to bring the European Union closer to its citizens.

The new President of the Commission will also play a key role in ensuring better governance of an enlarged and strong European Commission. Appointing a Vice-President responsible for competitiveness aspects of EU legislation and policy as well as organising an efficient division of work within the Commission will be the best way to tackle these challenges.

Note to the editor:

UNICE represents more than 16 million small, medium and large companies. 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