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NOMINATION OF THE NEW EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S PRESIDENT

UNICE congratulates the Irish Presidency on its successful efforts to achieve consensus on a new Commission President and looks forward to cooperating with Dr José Manuel Durão Barroso. The new Commission should put implementation of the Lisbon strategy at the top of its agenda.

UNICE applauds the nomination of Portuguese Prime Minister José Manuel Durão Barroso as the next Commission President. European business notes the successful economic reforms Mr Barroso has initiated in his home country during recent years. His attachment to strict compliance with the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact gives hope that the new Commission will urge the member states to budgetary discipline.

UNICE President Jürgen Strube: *"In 2000, the Portuguese EU-Presidency gave Europe a vision with the Lisbon strategy to make Europe the most competitive, dynamic, knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010. Now it is up to the new President of the Commission, the "Lisbon President", to make this vision a reality! European business assures Mr Barroso of its ongoing support and cooperation, and looks forward to meeting him soon."*

The new President of the Commission should make the necessary organisational arrangements in his college of Commissioners, so that the essential economic reforms can be tackled. Therefore, a strong Competitiveness Commissioner with the rank of a Commission Vice-President should be appointed, overseeing all Commission work affecting Europe's competitiveness. The renewal of the Commission is also an opportunity not to be missed to put in place a strategy for better communication about Europe.

Lastly, UNICE congratulates the Irish Presidency for the excellent management of its EU Presidency. After the successful enlargement and the agreement on the Constitution, the nomination of Mr Barroso is a good ending for a Presidency that has been discreet, determined and effective.

Note to the editor:

UNICE is the official voice of 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

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