

9 September 2004

**UNICE-BUSINESS VISION FOR EUROPE:
EUROPEAN DECISION-MAKERS:
“WE URGE YOU TO BE THE ENGINE FOR CHANGE”**

European business is an ardent supporter of European integration, but warns that reforms in the European economic structure are indispensable. “We urge you to be the engine for change” is the UNICE message to decision-makers in the new Commission, the new European Parliament, but also Member States’ governments. UNICE President Jürgen Strube, together with UNICE Vice-Presidents Charles Krombach (FEDIL/Luxembourg), Ulysses Kyriacopoulos (SEV/Greece), Peter Mitterbauer (IV/Austria), Jacques Schraven (VNO-NCW/The Netherlands) and Ernest-Antoine Seillière (MEDEF/France) conveyed this message to the media at a press conference, where UNICE presented the publication “*Business vision for Europe: growth, jobs and prosperity ...for our future*”, which describes in detail business priorities for the new political cycle.

UNICE President Jürgen Strube: “*It is promising that the new Commission has put the Lisbon strategy at the top of its agenda! This must now translate into better governance, regulation and communication. It is essential to focus on competitiveness. The new financial perspectives must also be primarily allocated to the objective of enhancing competitiveness in Europe.*”

UNICE appreciates Mr Barroso’s decision to give Mr Verheugen the competence to coordinate the Commission’s policy affecting competitiveness and the Commission’s role in the Competitiveness Council, which now finally has the chance to fulfil its task of evaluating all policy issues related to competitiveness.

The following policy priorities were highlighted:

- **Release entrepreneurial energy:** implement EU Entrepreneurship Action Plan and create appropriate business conditions (decrease tax burden, facilitate access to finance, reduce red tape)
- **Make environmental policy more effective and efficient:** adapt current EU climate change strategy to international political situation / conduct a comprehensive assessment of all potential impacts of the current REACH proposal
- **Boost innovation:** adopt Community patent with single-language regime (English)
- **Unleash the internal market in Europe:** eliminate transposition deficit of “Lisbon”-directives (over 25%) / adoption of services directive a priority for new political cycle
- **Improve the functioning of labour markets:** call for a moratorium on social legislation that imposes additional constraints on companies
- **Foster international trade and investment:** EU must not weaken its ambitions on industrial market access

UNICE President Jürgen Strube: “*After his promising start, Mr Barroso must now deliver. We expect his newly created group of Commissioners on the Lisbon Strategy to be small, efficient and not to lose sight of Europe’s real needs: growth, jobs and prosperity. In that spirit, UNICE and its member federations stand ready to assist Mr Barroso in building up the ‘Partnership for Europe’ he has called for.*”

Note to the editor:

UNICE is the official voice of more than 20 million small, medium and large companies. Active in European affairs since 1958, UNICE’s members are 36 central industrial and employers federations from 30 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe