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BUSINESS VISION FOR EUROPE:
GROWTH, JOBS AND PROSPERITY ...FOR OUR FUTURE**

**Speaking notes for Jacques Schraven
“Better Governance, Regulation, and Communication”**

Introduction by President Strube:

This agenda of policy priorities is a very complex one as it involves a large number of decision makers in the European Council, in the Parliament, in the Commission and back home in the capitals. To successfully conclude this agenda necessitates the right governance tools. Mr Schraven will now explain our vision of how the way EU politics is made needs to change.

President Schraven:

The Commission President designate Barroso spoke in July to the European Parliament: "Growth is at centre stage; it is the necessary link between social and economic goals". This is true and well spoken. However, we beg to go further: there is no job creation, no sustainable social protection, no viable environmental policy without growth, and there is no growth without competitiveness.

Currently, a high-level group chaired by former Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok is drafting a report on the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy. Our core message to this group is plain and simple. The report written by the last Wim Kok Group was entitled “jobs, jobs, jobs”. It would be appropriate if the next report was to bear the title: “competitiveness, competitiveness and competitiveness”, because this is what we need to focus on. This focus must translate into better governance, better regulation as well as better communication.

Although President Barroso did not include a “Super-Commissioner” for Competitiveness in his team, he has realised that there is a need for a coordination of “Lisbon” policy areas in EU institutions. We especially appreciate President Barroso’s personal commitment to take the lead in revitalizing the Lisbon process.

He has made a very good decision in assigning to Guenther Verheugen the competence to coordinate the Commission’s role in the Competitiveness Council, to chair the group of Commissioners for this Council formation and to make him a Vice-President of the Commission.

The Competitiveness Council has still not lived up to the mandate that heads of state gave to it, which is to “monitor all policy issues related to competitiveness”. With Commissioner Verheugen the Competitiveness Council finally has the chance to fulfil this task. This implies, however, that Mr Verheugen also takes the lead in developing tools for better regulation: So far, EU institutions lack the necessary means and methodology to properly assess the impact of new legislation on the economy. We expect concrete proposals from the Commission this autumn on how to proceed on this issue. These proposals need to include credible provisions on how impact assessments can be kept independent from those who draft the original measures.

European business would like to see impact assessments in the hands of an independent body. The Dutch agency “Actal” provides a good example of how such an agency could work.

Better governance further implies more involvement of the national level in the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy. We need to coordinate national reform efforts on the European level in a way that creates added value. Otherwise, the so-called “Open Method of Coordination” will remain nothing more than a bureaucratic nuisance. There is now a confusing number of EU processes to monitor and measure the reform efforts within the Lisbon Strategy, such as the “Cardiff Process” on single market economic reform or

the “Bologna Process” on educational reform. UNICE proposes that the Commission produces only one single “national action plan” per year and per Member State, which should contain all the recommendations for that Member State. This national action plan should then be discussed within national parliaments and with the national social partners.

In order to get back the people’s support for the European project, President Barroso has called for Partnerships for Europe “to develop an agenda for prosperity, solidarity and security in cooperation with all parties involved”. Business stands ready to be an active partner in these partnerships. UNICE is currently working on a common declaration with European social partners on the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy. One of the key tasks of these partnerships will be to create ownership amongst national stakeholders for the European project. It is time that the “spaceship Europe” lands.
