

3 November 2004

KOK REPORT: GOOD ANALYSIS BUT NOT ENOUGH CONCRETE PROPOSALS TO DYNAMISE EUROPE

The Kok report is a starting point for revitalisation of the Lisbon Strategy in March 2005. UNICE agrees with the analysis contained in the report, which underlines that the current state of play is unsatisfactory. The report also rightly calls on EU countries to draw up national action plans that make governments accountable for their implementation in national parliaments. Nevertheless, European business is disappointed not to find concrete and focused suggestions as to how to breathe fresh life into the Lisbon strategy. The report does not include clear recommendations for what governments should do to make Europe more competitive.

To pull the European economy out of its lethargy, Europe has to create more dynamism in its markets. European companies will invest more if markets and policy-makers offer the prospect of profitable growth. More confidence in the economic future of Europe and in Europe's capacity to carry through structural reforms is needed. Furthermore, social cohesion and environmental ambitions are only possible in a growing economy.

The role of the Competitiveness Council – not even mentioned in the report – will be crucial in preparation of the mid-term review at the Spring Summit in March 2005. The Council will have to work hand in hand with the new European Commission, the current Dutch EU Presidency and the Luxembourg Presidency hosting the Spring Summit.

Dr Strube concluded: *“The success of the Lisbon Strategy’s mid-term review lies largely in sound preparation of the Spring Summit – for which the Kok report is a first step – in tandem with the political will of EU countries to adapt Europe to the new challenges”.*

Note to the editor:

UNICE is the 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.

For further information, please contact: Maria Fernanda Fau: +32(0)2 237.65.62
www.unice.org