

9 December 2004

**UNICE COMPETITIVENESS DAY – PLAY TO WIN!  
HUNDREDS OF ENTREPRENEURS DEMONSTRATE IN BRUSSELS  
FOR A COMPETITIVE EUROPE**

On 9 December 2004 in Brussels hundreds of business people from all over Europe called on high-level European decision-makers to “Play to win”. European business demonstrated for economic reform and a competitive Europe and urged politicians at European and national level to implement the Lisbon strategy.

UNICE President Jürgen Strube: *“The European Business Community is here to demonstrate. We are here to explain our concerns. But above all, we are here to say that the European business community needs the EU to come to grips in global competition, and to convey to the EU institutions a strong and constructive support to put Europe back on track for the 21st century. Our message is one of hope because we believe in the EU as strongly as ever, but also one of worry because the EU is not doing as well as it could in the Lisbon reform agenda. Therefore our message is above all a call for action – action that must be governed by what I call the C4 approach: clarity, commitment, courage and cooperation.”*

This message was delivered to high-level political decision-makers such as President of the European Parliament *Josep Borrell*, Commission President *José Manuel Barroso*, Dutch Minister of Economics *Laurens Jan Brinkhorst*, Commission Vice-President *Günter Verheugen*, Commissioners *Danuta Hübner* and *Jan Figel*, ECB President *Jean-Claude Trichet* and *Giles Chichester*, Chairman of the EP’s Industry Committee.

National reform has a European dimension. UNICE called for national Lisbon initiatives, which must make sure that national action plans for reform are drafted, openly discussed and implemented. The European Commission must play an active role through peer pressure, disseminating best practices and by clearly saying where progress in Europe is not satisfactory.

Key priorities for UNICE in the new political cycle will be the adoption of a Community Patent with the English-only solution, establishment of a truly global dimension on climate change, simplification of legislation and a reduction in burdensome red tape, implementation of better impact assessments, and increased market access for goods and services in the successful conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda negotiations.

UNICE President Jürgen Strube: *“It is like in sport. The more competitive the environment and the more attractive the gains, the more you are pushed towards outstanding results. But you need to take up the challenge, you need to be part of the competition, and not hide your head in the sand.”*

In several presentations and panel discussions, European business leaders such as Vivendi-Chairman and President of ICC *Jean-René Fourtou*, President of Confindustria, FIAT and Ferrari *Luca Cordero di Montezemolo*, TPG CEO *Peter Bakker*, BDA President *Dieter Hundt*, SEV President *Ulysses Kyriacopoulos*, Procter & Gamble Group President Europe *Paul Polman* and Arcelor CEO *Guy Dollé* emphasised the need for ambitious steps to reach the Lisbon objectives.

The UNICE President concluded: *“The European business community believes in the European Union. This is the reason why so many of us have come today to the capital of the EU. European companies have the potential to produce a world-class performance if they are allowed to do so. Given the right conditions, and with determination on all sides, Europe’s economy can also produce a winning performance and PLAY TO WIN.”*

At the Competitiveness Day UNICE presented the brochure **“Play to win”**, which assesses policy messages from decision-makers at European and national level, and their implementation in economic reform initiatives. The brochure is available on the UNICE website at [www.unice.org](http://www.unice.org).

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