

26 January 2005

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2005 BUSINESS ASSESSMENT</b></p>
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UNICE acknowledges the Commission work programme for 2005 presented today by President Barroso.

Business assesses positively the work programme as a tool to anticipate European activities and policies, and to manage change in the Member States. UNICE supports the idea of prosperity, solidarity and security.

Philippe de Buck: *"Prosperity and solidarity go hand in hand, but we must have competitiveness in Europe in order to generate the wealth needed to sustain the social model"*.

In addition, business recommends that a communication strategy is developed without delay and in line with the actions envisaged at the European and national level in the work programme. Citizens need to hear from their governments why reforms are necessary to secure a better future.

The relaunch of the Lisbon strategy, as announced today, is an opportunity to refocus on growth and jobs, building up the economic pillar to enable us to meet Europe's social ambitions.

The Spring summit must set concrete policy priorities and decide on a number of dossiers to be completed by 2010. It is important that the Member States commit at the Spring Summit in March.

The mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy is the last chance to make the Lisbon strategy deliver. UNICE will react to the Commission's Spring report when it is published next week.

*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 38 central industrial and employers federations from 32 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe

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