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**COMMISSION SOCIAL POLICY AGENDA MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH
THE GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY**

Following last week's communication on the mid-term review, the Commission today published its communication on the EU social policy agenda. UNICE is concerned that some of the proposals on the EU social agenda could undermine the Lisbon goals of enhancing growth and employment.

UNICE Secretary General Philippe de Buck: *"Enhancing growth and employment is now the main goal of the European Commission. This must also apply to the EU social policy agenda. We do hope that the Commission will be consistent in its policy proposals. We are expecting a clear signal of a new approach and we will not accept any initiative coming from the social policy agenda that undermines growth and employment".*

Contradictions concern in particular the following issues:

- Restructuring and European works councils: restructuring is a necessary phenomenon in continuously changing economies and societies. The best way to address legitimate concerns about negative social consequences lies in devising policies to help workers to adapt their skills and to promote the creation of new jobs. A second consultation of the social partners on restructuring and European works councils will undermine the current work of the social partners in the framework of the EU social dialogue on those issues.
- Optional EU framework of collective bargaining: there is no need for an additional layer of EU collective bargaining over and above the national, sectoral, regional or company level, and the current Treaty provisions on EU social dialogue provide the right basis for the development of EU social dialogue.
- Transfer of undertakings and collective redundancies: modernisation of the directive on the transfer of undertakings and the directive on collective redundancies will help employment if it leads to a real simplification. European business will strongly oppose it if it results in new constraints on European companies.
- Information and consultation: the idea of codifying existing legislation on information and consultation disregards the fact that information and consultation vary depending on the issue and level at which it is best organised.

"The Commission is walking a very thin line. The content of future Commission proposals on these four highly sensitive issues will be crucial to demonstrate a real change of approach. For these subjects, as for any other issue, UNICE will insist that the Commission carries out an in-depth impact assessment before taking any final decisions on specific proposals" concluded Philippe de Buck.

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.