

9 February 2005

Climate protection: UNICE supports the Commission's efforts to achieve a truly comprehensive global agreement

The Commission today published a Communication entitled: "Winning the battle against global climate change". UNICE welcomes the international perspective adopted for tackling the climate change challenge.

Philippe de Buck, Secretary General of UNICE stated: "*UNICE supports actions to combat climate change in a long-term global framework. As outlined in today's Communication, it is vital that the EU institutions take an active approach in bringing together all parties for discussions on the international strategy and analyse alternative models and approaches, paying particular attention to the EU's attainment of the goals of growth and employment*".

UNICE supports the establishment of a truly comprehensive global agreement to combat the risks of climate change. This should be achieved long before 2012 to give industry the required confidence to promote long-term investments. Furthermore, as emissions from developing countries are likely to exceed those of developed countries within the next 15-20 years, a link between climate policy and development issues will become an indispensable part of future policy.

"The Commission's recommended roadmap clearly recognises that the setting of a unilateral EU reduction commitment could prejudice future international negotiations and marginalise the continent from a competitive business standpoint, without achieving significant global environmental improvements", noted Mr de Buck, "*a key EU objective must therefore be the establishment and maintenance of a global level playing-field for industry both within the EU and with our trading partners. The 2005 Spring Council must consider this recommendation.*"

Some other key issues for developing EU climate change policy are:

- **Burden-sharing:** many EU companies have already significantly reduced their greenhouse gas emissions by implementing technological improvements and management systems. Measures to tackle climate change must involve all players in society assuming an equitable share of the burden. Influencing consumer behaviour with regard to energy use must be a key medium- and long-term policy objective.
- **New technologies:** the Communication reinforces the vital role that must be played by research, innovation, technological change and transfers in combating the risks of climate change. It is important to promote innovation not only by facilitating new applications of existing technologies but also by fostering radically new technologies based on new scientific discoveries.
- **Impact assessment:** any decision about the EU's future climate strategy should be guided by comprehensive impact assessments and meaningful cost-benefit analyses using sound scientific methodologies and operational experience. UNICE remains concerned about how the competitive impact of EU climate change strategy has been evaluated for the period 2005-2012, and urges the Commission to maintain focus on the unsolved issues for that period. Competitiveness aspects for the post-2012 period must be assessed using more thorough methodologies, considering various scenarios regarding the climate policies of the largest emitters such as USA, China and India.
- **Use of Kyoto flexible mechanisms:** there is the need for full and effective use of the Kyoto flexible mechanisms to improve the cost-efficiency of current EU climate strategy.

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.

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