

8 March 2005

**ACHIEVING WORLD-CLASS PUBLIC PROCUREMENT
ACROSS EUROPE**

UNICE Secretary General, Mr Philippe de Buck: *“There is a compelling case for achieving world-class public procurement across Europe. Development of the Single Market – and public purchasing within it – is vital to the economic strength of Europe. One of the most ambitious targets of the Lisbon strategy is to make Europe the world’s most competitive and innovative market by 2010. With an annual turnover/volume of €1,500 billion or 16% of the EU’s GDP, public procurement clearly has a role to play in achieving this target.”*

It is vital when dealing with public procurement that maximum effort is made to secure best value for taxpayers’ money, improve the quality of public services provided and also use it to strengthen the competitive edge of European industry.

To this end UNICE has produced a vision statement for public procurement: *“Achieving World-Class Public Procurement across Europe”* which illustrates the key principles European business considers as fundamental for creating a world-class public procurement process in Europe. These principles include:

- ❑ **Strong and fair competition**, where public authorities in each member state are open and aiming to do business with the best of industry across Europe, thus achieving one true single market;
- ❑ **Quality**, value for money and continuous improvement as the goals for procurement - **not lowest price**;
- ❑ **Efficient procurement processes** that keep tendering costs and timescales under control;
- ❑ Special efforts to ensure that public procurement markets offer **fair access to SMEs**;
- ❑ Development of **public-private partnerships** to improve public services and infrastructure;
- ❑ Fair **competition between the public and private sectors** as public sectors across Europe become more entrepreneurial.

Public procurement is not a routine or simple administrative task and should not be treated as such. On each of the principles, the task ahead entails a combination of steps to ensure that the legal framework, political commitment and procurement skills are in place across Europe.

Philippe de Buck concluded: *“With this vision paper European industry and business is demonstrating its willingness to play its part in the drive to improve public procurement in Europe. In issuing this vision paper, UNICE calls on the European institutions and member-state governments to also raise their vision and to provide the leadership that is required to achieve world-class public procurement across Europe.”*

A .pdf copy of “Achieving World-Class Public Procurement across Europe” is attached for your information.

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.