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**TWO KEY PROGRAMMES FOR COMPETITIVENESS:
INSTRUMENTAL FOR MORE GROWTH AND JOBS**

On today's presentation by the European Commission of a proposal for the Seventh Research and Development Framework Programme and a future Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme, both to cover from 2007 to 2013, UNICE Secretary General Philippe de Buck commented: "*The publishing of these two important proposals together today must be a signal that they are complementary to one another. There is an urgent need to bring results of research and innovation to the market, thereby contributing to the EU's competitiveness, deeply needed for more growth and jobs.*"

1. The Seventh Research and Development Framework Programme represents a potential step towards making research and development a responsible contributor to European competitiveness which is a key requirement for growth and jobs. UNICE specifically

- appreciates the renewed focus on cooperative research in specific areas identified on the basis of their contributions to EU objectives; this should increase industry participation in the Framework Programme;
- urges for the proposed Joint Technology Initiatives to be adequately funded and established with workable operational and management structures;
- is of the strong opinion that a key objective of the proposed European Research Council must be to achieve synergies between 'frontier' and 'applied' research to stimulate transition of research to commercially viable products and services.

The significant increase in the budgetary envelope (over EUR 70 billion / based on constant prices 2007-2013, double the amount of the previous Framework Programme) risks missing its aim if it is not accompanied by more efficiency and effectiveness of the programme, and also a simplification of rules for participating in the programme. It must make a difference and lead to European excellence in research, development and technological innovation.

2. The Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme brings together in a single framework (with a budgetary envelope of over EUR 4 billion / based on constant prices 2007-2013) more than seven existing and planned Community programmes in fields that have been identified as most critical to boosting European productivity and sustainable growth. It will contain 3 sub-programmes on Entrepreneurship & Innovation, ICT Policy Support and Intelligent Energy-Europe. UNICE appreciates

- this simplification of Community programmes as positive to refocusing visible and effective actions on growth and jobs;
- that competitiveness is taken as the overriding theme that must inspire and drive all the sub-programmes;
- that Community financial instruments focus on growth and innovative companies.

UNICE urges the Commission to live up to the "think small first" approach, taking into account entrepreneurs and SME views during conception and implementation of actions.

As the Seventh Framework Programme and the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme are important parts of future Community expenditure under the "Competitiveness" heading of the **Financial Perspectives 2007-2013**, UNICE reiterates that a sufficient allocation of resources to competitiveness-enhancing programmes should be the priority objective.

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.