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MORE GROWTH AND JOBS FOR EUROPE: MOVING FROM DIAGNOSIS TO THERAPY

Ahead of the Spring European Council, the Commission's Progress Report on the European Growth and Jobs Strategy presented today offers a good basis for policy makers throughout Europe to deliver on the Strategy for Growth and Jobs.

The report makes an assessment of the 25 National Reform Programmes in which each Member State put forward its planned and current national reform actions. It stresses the strengths but also weaknesses of each National Reform Programme. European business hopes that the Spring European Council will take these assessments seriously into account and make improvements to the reform programmes where necessary. The Commission and the Council must now concentrate on resolute governance mechanisms to monitor national reforms.

The four actions to be taken in partnership between EU and the national level at this year's Spring Summit are putting the right focus on Europe's most urgent needs for reform. But they must be perceived from the angle of how they can create more growth and jobs, in order to deliver:

- Knowledge and innovation: Europe must above all stimulate private involvement in research in order to solve the "European paradox" that it is world-class in research but mediocre in innovation.
- SME potential: the surest way to jobs is to alleviate regulatory burdens on innovative and growing SMEs.
- More and better jobs: European labour markets must adapt to today's dynamic business environment through a "flexicurity" approach, protecting people rather than jobs.
- Energy: competition in the internal energy market must be improved, and a real pan-European perspective developed to cope effectively with the issues of supply security and improvement of consistency between energy and environment policies.

UNICE President Ernest-Antoine Seillière: *"The lack of growth is the root of Europe's problems. The National Reform Programmes are a step forward. But many of the programmes lack ambition when it comes to concrete implementation of the announced reforms. We must go beyond a mere diagnosis of Europe's problems and start the therapy, with a clear governance process. European Social Partners are invited to play a role. UNICE is ready to participate under the condition that it focuses on the real issues."*

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 39 central industrial and employers' federations from 33 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe.

For further information, please contact: Maria Fernanda Fau +32(0)2 237.65.62

www.unice.org