![UNICE - THE VOICE OF BUSINESS IN EUROPE]

Date: 11th January 2007

SUBJECT: Fourth EIT Stakeholders consultation meeting 15-01-2007

At the fourth EIT stakeholders consultation on Monday 15th January, UNICE will be invited to share its views on the EIT. Based on internal discussions the following statements may be made on UNICE's behalf:

INITIAL COMMENTS

□ We welcome the Commission's October 18th communication[1] which gives the *clearest statement* to date of what is envisaged for the EIT.

□ We believe that the EIT has an *important role to play* in making the European Research Area (ERA) more innovatively capable and competitive.

   We will actively *support* its establishment in the knowledge and expectation that it will be *developed in close cooperation with the business community* and based on clear understanding on industrial requirements and processes.

□ We do however agree with the Education Council conclusions of the 14th November which highlight a number of practical details that need to be examined in more detail including questions of funding and administration.

FOCUS

□ The approach outlined in the October 18th communication sets out a *networking approach to the EIT* with clear links to existing community programmes and initiatives. While requiring more clarification on how this will function in practice, we agree with and support this approach.

□ We believe that the EIT should have a research strategy which has a *strong mission orientation*.

   The main objective of the EIT should be to focus and prioritise research, development and innovation (and to a lesser extent education and training of researchers) in fields that are *of importance to European society and business*.

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[1] Proposal for a regulation… establishing the European Institute of Technology – COM (2006) 604, October 18th, 2006

☐ The strategic objectives / thematic priorities of the EIT should be closely linked to the strategic research agendas of the European Technology Platforms (ETPs) and the soon to be established Joint Technology Initiatives.

The ETPs in particular have been established to provide strategic guidance and the agendas in FP7. They should be used to provide similar strategic guidance for EIT programmes and help identify those areas of importance to Europe where R&D and innovation efforts need to be focused.

FUNDING

☐ We agree with suggestions that EIT overseen research activities should be able to seek funding under Community programmes (such as the Seventh Research Framework (FP7), the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP), Integrated Life Long Learning etc.).

This can only be possible however if the rules of these programmes are applied in the same way to EIT projects as they would to any other potential applicant seeking funding. There should be no preferential treatment given to any EIT project seeking funding.

☐ The Commission still however needs to clarify in more detail the budgetary aspects of its October 18th communication. There exists enough ambiguity with regards to the budgetary aspects to cause some unease;

ADDITIONAL POINTS

☐ We firmly believe that the EIT must be free from any form of political interference. Choices made by the EIT must be based solely on excellence and competition. This principle must be established from the very start.

☐ We also believe that it must be ensured that the EIT's procedures (selection, administrative or others) are as transparent and open as possible;