

11 October 2000

**UNICE STATEMENT TO EU SUMMIT IN BIARRITZ:  
“BOLD OBJECTIVES REQUIRE BOLD DECISIONS”**

On the eve of the EU Summit in Biarritz, UNICE requests the French Presidency today to take note of the views of UNICE on the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the IGC and the Community Patent.

UNICE supports the objective of establishing a **Charter of Fundamental Rights** making the overriding importance and relevance of those rights and freedoms more visible to the Union's citizens. However, UNICE insists that the Charter should respect the present competences of the EU and not extend existing powers. UNICE regrets that the wording is still ambiguous in some articles on economic and social rights. Therefore, Secretary General Dirk Hudig says that “the text for the charter as proposed for the Biarritz Summit is not fit to become legally binding”. UNICE believes that “the final version of the Charter should clarify those remaining ambiguities”.

European business feels that institutional reform is a prerequisite for EU enlargement. In the future, the ability of the EU to take decisions at all and deliver results is a key issue. UNICE strongly supports **extension of qualified majority voting (QMV)** to four important issues for business:

- ?? implementation and simplification of adopted tax measures (new policy initiatives and environmental fiscal measures still by unanimity);
- ?? in the context of the common commercial policy, international negotiations and agreements on services, intellectual property and foreign direct investment;
- ?? adoption of specific measures in support of business competitiveness, entrepreneurship, innovation, research and technological development;
- ?? implementation of measures to remove obstacles and to adapt national social security systems to the free movement of workers and self-employed persons in the single market.

Failure to break the current impasse on extension of QMV to some or all of these issues will lead the enlargement process to a gridlock and will undermine the functioning of the internal market and create new barriers to trade or distortions of competition. “Business cannot accept such an outcome”, Mr Hudig states.

At the Lisbon Summit the basic decision was made to change the Treaty to establish a **judicial framework for the Community Patent**. The lack of an EU integrated patent system is standing in the way of competitiveness and innovation in Europe. UNICE fully supports the Commission's proposals for establishing this judicial framework, which is on the agenda of the IGC. UNICE urges the Member States to take this unique opportunity and implement this without delay.

The Lisbon Summit set as its objective that Europe should become the most competitive economic area in the world and see employment rise to more than 70% of the workforce. “These bold objectives can only be achieved if equally bold decisions are taken whereby the EU institutions can function better”, Dirk Hudig concludes.

*enclosures*