

25 July 2001

EUROPEAN GOVERNANCE : BUSINESS SAYS DIFFERENT MODELS CAN CO-EXIST
--

Accountability, coherence and effectiveness are key for good European governance, says UNICE, the voice of business in Europe. The Commission's White Paper on European Governance, published today, is a welcome initiative. "As nearly 80% of all economic and social legislation affecting business is made in Brussels, the private sector needs to be part of the European governance process", explains Daniela Israelachwili, Acting Secretary General of UNICE.

"We would like to see a more open and transparent regulatory system, based on independent cost-benefit analysis, before the Commission starts working on legislation. Sound use of the subsidiarity principle is necessary to avoid an accumulation of decision-making layers which add to the regulatory burden weighing on business, especially on SMEs." Governance also implies greater use of alternatives to legislation. Voluntary or negotiated agreements, co-operation and co-regulation leave more room for business to take its own responsibilities and propose solutions. "We are pleased to see the White Paper pointing in this direction", Mrs Israelachwili says.

The social dialogue at EU level is a key element in the process of governance. Being an autonomous process where private-sector European employers, represented by UNICE, negotiate on social and employment issues with ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation, the social dialogue is an essential tool to find acceptable solutions which meet the needs of labour market players. The social dialogue therefore deserves a special place in the debate on governance.

Finally, coherence is vital. Not only among different policies within the EU, but also on a global scale. UNICE is pleased to see that the Commission insists on the need to promote the debate on global governance. Concretely, this would require stricter and clearer allocation of policy areas within the framework of international specialised agencies and organisations.

Note to the editor:

UNICE is the official voice of more than 16 million small, medium and large companies active in Europe, employing over 106 million people. Active in European affairs since 1958, UNICE's members are 33 central industrial and employers federations from 26 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe.

For further information, please contact:

Susanne Klunkert:

+32(0)2 237 65 62

GSM:

+32(0)477 277 963

Website :

www.unice.org