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EUROPEAN BUSINESS BACKS EU TRADE & COMPETITIVENESS STRATEGY

Europe must rise to the competitive challenges of the 21st century – mainly increasing competition from emerging countries – through an aggressive policy to restore European competitiveness and to allow EU companies to play their role in growth generation and job creation. Until now, the crucial role of trade and investment and its impact on EU competitiveness and structural change has been the missing link in the EU's Growth and Jobs strategy.

With its new Trade and Competitiveness strategy – “*Global Europe: Competing in the world*”, the EU will be able to tackle the key challenges for European business in international trade including:

1. A renewed commitment to get the WTO Doha negotiations back on track to rapidly conclude an ambitious agreement.
2. A much stronger focus on economic growth opportunities to launch new bilateral or regional free-trade negotiations with high growth markets such as ASEAN or Russia.
3. A coherent market access strategy to remove the increasing number of non-tariff barriers that hamper the competitiveness of European business.
4. A more resolute strategy to resolve bilateral trade and investment frictions with China.

In addition, European business welcomes the Trade Commissioner's commitment to address inconsistencies in EU policies that undermine the global competitiveness of European companies or industries.

The Confederation of European Business – UNICE – will work hard to ensure that the EU follows through on this strategy by rapidly implementing its recommendations.

“One year ago at the EU Market Access Symposium, I asked Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson to focus EU Trade Policy much more on a reform agenda to strengthen the international competitiveness of European business. With the new Trade & Competitiveness strategy to be launched today, Commissioner Mandelson will help Europe tackle the major challenge of the 21st century: competition from the rising emerging trade powers of Asia and South America. The new strategy's strong focus on competitiveness, growth and jobs is the right approach for growth and jobs in Europe.”
said UNICE President Ernest-Antoine Seillière.

NOTE TO THE EDITOR

UNICE – the Confederation of European Business represents 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.

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