

15 June 2004

**UNICE MESSAGE TO THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL ON 17/18 JUNE  
GROWTH STRATEGY URGENTLY NEEDED**

**The Presidents of UNICE's 36 member federations gathered in Dublin to discuss the business message to the upcoming European Council on 17-18 June. The Presidents met Pat Cox, the outgoing President of the European Parliament.**

UNICE's Presidents discussed the European economic situation, the draft constitution and EU climate change policy. They also adopted a draft joint agreement with ETUC (European Trade Union Confederation) on work-related stress.

In Dublin UNICE's Council of Presidents approved in principle a business *Memorandum to the New Institutions*, which sets out the business vision of Europe for the new political cycle 2004-2009. The document will be presented on 9 September 2004.

**1. Economic situation – urgency for a strategy on growth**

The Presidents of UNICE are concerned by the situation of the European economy. Growth is low and fragile. Policy-makers must therefore act without delay to put in place a strategy for growth that helps to fulfil the objectives of the Lisbon strategy. The strategy for growth should be supported by better regulation with new legislation only proposed if preceded by a business impact assessment.

It is also imperative to capitalise on an enlarged Europe's pool of skills and industrial advantages. High oil prices are threatening the world recovery. Oil prices need to return to levels consistent with sustainable global economic prosperity and stability. On the Stability and Growth Pact, the UNICE Council of Presidents spoke out against a change to its rules: Member States have to stick to those rules!

UNICE strongly supports the fight against terrorism and offers its cooperation to Mr de Vries. Citizens must be given a high level of security and businesses need to be able to operate.

**2. European Governance**

The new President of the Commission will play a key role in ensuring better governance of an enlarged and strong European Commission. Appointing a Vice-President responsible for competitiveness aspects of EU legislation and policy as well as organising an efficient division of work within the Commission should be high on the new President's agenda.

**3. Draft EU Constitution – strengthen the competitiveness dimension**

For business, it is key that the Member States agree on a Treaty which provides the basis to:

- strengthen European competitiveness, adaptability to structural change and employment prospects;
- strengthen Europe's economies and full realisation of EMU's potential;
- a successful enlargement of the EU without any distortion of the Internal Market;
- strengthen Europe's economic power on the international stage.

#### **4. EU Climate change policy – call to revise EU climate change approach**

Bearing in mind that the USA has not ratified the Kyoto Protocol, and that Russia has not yet taken a decision on the issue, the Community policies envisaged for the period 2008-2012 have to be re-assessed. A revised climate change strategy needs to be designed to give an answer to the question of how negative impacts on EU industrial competitiveness can be avoided in the case of non-ratification of Kyoto by the major economic areas, whilst promoting climate protection.

Preparation of this revised strategy should start immediately, so that it can be discussed at the 2005 Spring Summit, at the same time as elements of a new international regime establishing genuinely global cooperation.

#### **5. Work-related stress: agreement with ETUC adopted**

UNICE's Council of Presidents also approved a draft agreement on work-related stress negotiated in the European social dialogue. This non-legally binding agreement will be published when formally adopted by the employer and worker signatory organisations.

#### **6. Enlargement - Turkey**

UNICE refers to its 2002 position "UNICE welcomes Turkey's promising reform process, which it should sustain, and urges Member States to open up negotiations with this country as soon as it has completed the remaining tasks with regard to the Copenhagen political criteria stated in the Commission's report. This would offer EU and Turkish companies a more coherent and sustainable framework in which to conduct their economic activities".

#### **Note to the editor:**

UNICE represents more than 16 million small, medium and large companies. Active in European affairs since 1958, UNICE's members are 36 central industrial and employers federations from 29 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe

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For further information, please contact: Maria Fernanda Fau: +32 (0)2 237.65.62  
Website: [www.unice.org](http://www.unice.org)