



18 February 1999

**FIXED-TERM WORK:
UNICE APPROVES DRAFT FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT**

Today, Thursday 18 February 1999, the Presidents of European employer organisations, meeting in an extraordinary Council in Brussels, unanimously approved the terms of the draft framework agreement on fixed-term work negotiated between UNICE, CEEP and ETUC.

Provided that the text is also approved by the supreme decision-making bodies of the other European social partners, the framework agreement on fixed-term work will be the third agreement concluded under the procedure provided for in the social protocol to the Maastricht Treaty. The European Commission will then be asked to submit the framework agreement to the Council of Ministers so that the latter can take a decision making its terms binding in all countries of the European Union.

“This is a balanced agreement”, said President Georges Jacobs, “which will improve employment perspectives. Fixed-term work is a necessary form of work in flexible labour markets. This agreement takes full account of that fact”.

“After ten months of negotiations, UNICE demonstrates with this new agreement”, added President Jacobs, “its capacity to commit itself as a social partner, and is making a new contribution to European employment strategy”.

In particular, it was important for the millions of employers concerned in the seventeen European countries affected that this framework agreement should:

- leave Member States and/or the social partners the flexibility they need to define the practical arrangements for application of the principles set out, taking account of the specific features of some sectors or some jobs (e.g. seasonal work);
- specify that particular employment conditions may be subject to seniority thresholds;
- not place restrictions on conclusion of the first fixed-term work contract;
- leave the choice of measures to prevent possible abuse in the renewal of successive contracts;
- allow the social partners in Member States – if they so wish – to adapt the provisions on implementation in order to take account of particular circumstances;
- exclude temporary work from its scope.

