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Membre de l'Union des Éditeurs de la Presse Périodique

MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY GENERAL

Dear UNICE@news Readers,

Europe's economic growth still too slow



Autumn kicked off with UNICE's Economic Outlook. We had to revise our spring forecast for economic growth in EU25 downwards to 1.6% from 2.2% for 2005, and to 2.1% from 2.4% for 2006.

Even though the prospects seem better for next year, growth rates of this order are hardly sufficient to make a significant dent in unemployment, which we believe will reduce only a sliver to 8.7% from 8.9% in EU25.

These figures tell their own story. Anaemic growth is reflected in a lacklustre labour market. Uncertainty on the labour market damps consumer confidence, which in turn contributes to slow growth.

On the chemicals dossier, there is a glimmer of light. The European Parliament has voted through a set of amendments which take a step towards a more workable REACH system by excluding low tonnages from registration requirements. Nevertheless, serious problems remain for authorisation/substitution. UNICE will continue to work for further improvements which make REACH more geared to business realities without compromising the regulation's health and environment objectives. On the services directive, some good progress has been made by the vote in the EP Internal Market Committee; this is an important step towards completing the internal market for services.

Philippe de Buck
Secretary General

UNICE HIGHLIGHTS

REACH VOTE IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

■ After two years of heated debates and controversy, REACH has entered a decisive phase with the European Parliament (EP) first reading vote on 17 November and the UK Presidency aiming at a political agreement by the end of the year.

The European Parliament has voted in favour of a few useful and positive amendments, namely on registration. The compromise adopted by the three main political forces goes in the right direction to make REACH more workable for small and medium enterprises.

The compromise facilitates the registration of low tonnages (1-10T) compared with the Commission proposal by introducing a limited prioritisation of substances, and gives industry responsibility to decide whether or not they fulfil the prioritisation criteria. However, it lacks any risk-based approach for higher tonnages.

Unfortunately the EP vote also entails an additional burden and concerns for industry, in particular regarding the principle of authorisation and substitution. The stricter criteria for granting an authorisation to use a substance put industrial processes at risk with no environmental or health benefit. The introduction of an authorisation with a time limit of five years ignores the reality of industry's product cycles. Requesting a substitution plan even if the risk is proved to be adequately controlled would add uncertainty and make the whole system even more complex.

UNICE concludes that the outcome of the plenary vote by the European Parliament is not good enough to make REACH workable for industry as a whole. UNICE will keep up its efforts on authorisation/substitution issues to make innovation happen in Europe. The Council and the Commission must make the necessary changes to achieve a cost-effective and workable REACH approach.

For further information, please contact [Nadine Toscani](#).

STRONG MESSAGES DELIVERED AT THE MACROECONOMIC DIALOGUE ON 8 NOVEMBER



UNICE President Ernest-Antoine Seillière urged the ECB to carefully consider an early tightening of monetary conditions. Low levels of interest rates are appropriate and should be maintained in an environment where downside risks to growth dominate. No sign of second-round effects from high oil prices can be perceived at this juncture.

Regarding fiscal policy, a stronger commitment to sound medium term objectives is urgently needed. Public deficits are higher than they should be in a majority of EU countries. While it is damaging the credibility of the new Stability and Growth Pact, this also signals a lack of government preparation for the challenge of demographic ageing.

Stronger labour market conditions are the key to restoring households' confidence and willingness to spend. This will give a decisive impulse to a more

domestically oriented pick-up in activity. In this context, it is crucial that wage moderation is preserved so that companies are in a position to hire on a larger scale during the forthcoming recovery.

Anyhow, Europe is currently afflicted by a more fundamental growth deficit compared to other developed economies. This will not be resolved unless there is a clear commitment to more ambitious reform programmes.

The roadmap is well known: it is a Lisbon strategy refocused on growth and jobs. The ownership of the process has to be restored urgently, and this will hopefully be done through submission and implementation of the new National Action Plans.

More determined actions should also come at the EU level with a focus on improving the regulatory environment and on completing the internal market for services.

For further information, please contact [Marc Stocker](#) or consult [speech by UNICE President](#).

THE VOICE OF BUSINESS IN EUROPE

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13-18 DECEMBER: HONG KONG WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

■ The Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference will take place in Hong Kong at the end of this year. UNICE is very concerned about the lowering of expectations for the Conference – which was expected to agree on modalities (the level of liberalisation or the rules to be improved) for the DDA negotiating issues: agriculture, industrial market access (NAMA), services and trade facilitation. However, due to disagreements over agriculture, NAMA and services between the major players in the round (the EU, the US, Brazil, India, Japan, China, etc.), the outcome of the Conference is uncertain. For European business, the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations are vital

to increase market access for goods and services in fast-growing emerging countries and to improve WTO rules to reduce costly delays at borders and ports. UNICE has been mobilising the global business community in support of a successful conference (see Global Business Declaration for Hong Kong in the International Relations section). The only solution to the current impasse is to adopt an ambitious and balanced approach on all negotiating issues. The main players need to agree to ambitious trade liberalisation in agriculture, NAMA and services. All countries need to show flexibility and keep the negotiating channels open.

For further information, please contact [Adrian van den Hoven](#).

INTERNAL MARKET

NEXT STEPS ON THE “EUROVIGNETTE” TRAIL... ‘PISTOLS AT DAWN’?

■ The European Parliament’s Transport and Tourism Committee (TRAN) voted on 14 November (in an extraordinary meeting in Strasbourg) on its 2nd reading report (rapporteur: Corien Wortmann-Kool) on the “Eurovignette” directive proposal.

On first reading of the results it appears that what the TRAN committee has voted for is to... send the “Eurovignette” issue straight to conciliation with the Council.

Amongst the main points (and most difficult to accept from an industry standpoint) which the TRAN Committee has decided to include in the directive are those which seek to:

- extend the scope of the directive (from 2010) to include all utility vehicles weighing over 3.5 tonnes;
- include external costs generated by the road freight industry in calculating road charges; and

- extend the definition of “sensitive” areas (where a surcharge can be imposed on top of the initial “Eurovignette” charge) to urban areas.

This whole issue is heading for conciliation because the Council of Ministers is unlikely to accept some (if not all) of the above-listed TRAN Committee changes.

The Council is, for instance, opposed to the three examples which the TRAN Committee is proposing be attached to the Commission’s original proposal and made its views known in its initial response to that proposal (which the TRAN Committee would have been well aware of).

The EP will vote on the TRAN Committee’s 2nd reading report in its December plenary session following which the Council will make its views known.

Then the likelihood is that it will be, to paraphrase the old adage, conciliation pistols at dawn... once, that is, both sides can agree to sit around the table.

For further information, please contact [Vincent McGovern](#).

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A FIRST STEP TOWARDS THE CREATION OF THE SERVICES MARKET IN EUROPE

On 22 November, the European Parliament's Internal Market Committee gave a significant push for adoption of the proposed services directive. It adopted a report amending the directive by 25 votes to 15 with 5 abstentions. The report will be voted on by the plenary of the Parliament at the beginning of next year.

UNICE has reacted swiftly to the vote, welcoming the outcome and encouraging MEPs to support the thrust of the report just adopted and make sure that the services directive remains neutral with respect to the posting of workers directive. UNICE will now prepare its detailed contribution for the forthcoming plenary vote.

For further information, please contact [Carlos Almaraz](#) or consult [UNICE press release](#).

PUBLIC PAPERS RECENTLY ADOPTED

- Letter to the [EP Transport and Tourism Committee ahead of the vote on the proposal for the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructure and on market access to port services](#)
- Letter to the [EP Internal Market and Consumer Protection ahead of the vote on the proposed directive on services in the internal market](#)

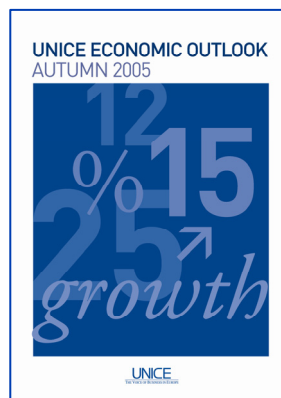
ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

AUTUMN ECONOMIC OUTLOOK: CONFIRMING A DISTURBINGLY WEAK PERFORMANCE IN EUROPE

Our autumn report was released on 8 November, giving a business perspective on economic trends across Europe.

In this assessment, real GDP growth estimates for the whole of 2005 have been cut back significantly to 1.6% for the European Union and to an even less impressive 1.3% for the euro area. In an otherwise dynamic global environment, Europe is lagging behind and finds itself less able to cope with the impact of high oil prices than other major oil-importing economies.

Regarding the outlook in 2006, conditions remain in place for a modest, but still insufficient, strengthening of growth. Our growth forecasts for next year currently show estimates of 2.1% for the EU and 1.8% for the euro area. European



businesses are ready to play their part in this recovery. They have made the necessary restructuring and consolidation efforts, and are prepared to invest and hire on a larger scale if conditions to run profitable business are met.

It is now up to policy-makers to make the right decisions to let Europe embark on a higher, but most importantly sustainable, growth path.

Macroeconomic policies will not alone be able to achieve that. Fiscal deficits are already higher than they should be and interest rates are currently at historically low levels. We urgently need to move ahead with a strong agenda for reforms that can address the more fundamental weakness of the European economy.

For further information, please contact [Marc Stocker](#) or consult [UNICE Economic Outlook Autumn 2005](#).

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NATIONALISATION OF THE LISBON STRATEGY IS UNDER WAY

■ According to the renewed Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs, EU Member States were supposed to submit National Reform Programmes to the Commission by October 2005. In these reports the Member States are to outline what national action they are taking in order to respond to the great economic challenges Europe is currently facing. In particular the reports should respond to each of the 24 “EU Guidelines for growth and jobs” which demand action in all the “Lisbon” areas, e.g. in fiscal policy, research, innovation, better regulation, or labour market reform.

Most EU Member States had delivered such a report by end-October, and a preliminary assessment by UNICE of the reports which are currently available found that most of them are of good quality, well-structured and useful to assess a country’s reform policies.

Have the National Reform Programmes spawned any policy action that would not have been carried out anyway? In most cases this question will probably be answered with “no”. Most reports even refer explicitly to already existing national reform initiatives. Nonetheless there is a clear added value to the National Reform Programmes as comparability of national policy action in the European Union has greatly improved. This is an important first step to a deeper coordination of national micro-economic policy.

The Commission will now proceed with a thorough assessment of the reform programmes, and publish the results in its spring report in January 2006. UNICE will follow up the Commission’s assessment work.

For further information, please contact [Folker Franz](#).

PUBLIC PAPER RECENTLY ADOPTED

■ [UNICE Economic Outlook Autumn 2005](#)

LEGAL AFFAIRS

TRILATERAL PATENT OFFICES MEET USERS

■ Heads of the Trilateral Patent Offices (EPO, USPTO, JPO) met users in Europe, US and Japan on 17 November 2005 in Munich to present progress in their Trilateral cooperation towards convergence of practices and requirements and their efforts to improve the functioning of the patent system in their regions to the benefit of users.

UNICE presented the views of European users about the necessary improvements to the European patent system and discussions on convergence. The Trilateral Patent Offices highlighted the importance and the usefulness of this dialogue with

the users and stressed the focus of their efforts on improving quality of the patents granted in the Trilateral regions.

In addition, the Industry Trilateral (UNICE, IPO/AIPLA and JIPA) had a special contact with the Heads of the Trilateral Offices to present them progress of its work on one application, one format, one search. The Trilateral Offices welcomed this and expressed their willingness to continue a close dialogue with the Industry Trilateral on key issues for users of the patent system.

For further information, please contact [Ilias Konteas](#).

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COMMISSION'S COMPANY LAW ACTION PLAN: A CHANCE TO GET IT RIGHT

The European Commission's [Company Law and Corporate Governance Action Plan](#), issued in 2003 is due to enter the "medium-term" phase of its actions (2006 – 2008).

The European Commission is keen to find out whether the actions foreseen in 2003 are the appropriate ones. This was the [message](#) of Commissioner McCreevy at the UK Presidency Conference on Corporate Governance in London on 14 November. Commissioner McCreevy also indicated at the conference that he would issue "in the next few weeks" a consultation on the future priorities of the Action Plan in December. The consultation would take place over a three-month period, as opposed to the normal eight weeks.

We are currently developing UNICE's comments on the future priorities of the Commission's Action Plan and they should be available in the coming days. We can nevertheless at this stage already mention our view that good and efficient company law and corporate governance are of utmost importance to companies and their stakeholders. Excessive regulatory burdens may ultimately restrict the freedom of companies to do business, thereby holding them back from releasing their potential. This is detrimental to business, to company shareholders and more generally to the EU as a whole.

For further information, please contact [David Coleman](#).

In the context of constructive dialogue with the EU institutions, UNICE has developed "[Principles for an EU approach to Company Law and Corporate Governance](#)".

Since issuing the Action Plan the European Commission has carried out, or is in the process of carrying out, almost all the actions foreseen in the short term (2003 – 2005). This has entailed significant activity on the part of the EU institutions and other interested parties, including European companies, over a relatively short period of time.

If Commissioner McCreevy recognises the existence of "regulatory fatigue" when referring to implementation of the Financial Services Action Plan (FSAP), we would like to extend this expression to "regulatory exhaustion" when taking into account FSAP at the same time company law, corporate governance, accounting standards and complying with the US Sarbanes-Oxley Act, in particular section 404 on internal controls.

It is in this context that UNICE will deliver its comments on the future priorities of the Company Law Action Plan shortly.

STATE AID ACTION PLAN

UNICE has reacted to the Commission's Communication on state aid for innovation. UNICE endorses the principle that Member States should redirect aid towards horizontal objectives of common interest such as innovation and R&D and

target it to identified market failures. UNICE welcomes most of the Commission proposals to encourage innovation although it sets out some suggestions for further development in its position paper.

For further information, please contact [Erik Berggren](#) or consult [UNICE comments](#).

PUBLIC PAPERS RECENTLY ADOPTED

- UNICE preliminary comments on [data retention](#)
- UNICE comments on [state aid for innovation](#)
- UNICE letter to [IASB on fair value measurement](#)

WORK IN PROGRESS

- UNICE comments on Commission proposals on harmonisation of criminal sanctions to combat counterfeiting and piracy

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

TROIKA EDUCATION & TRAINING: UNICE AND EU SOCIAL PARTNERS PRESENT THEIR VIEWS TO EDUCATION MINISTERS

■ On 14 November 2005, EU social partners were invited to exchange views with the Troika of Education Ministers on the main education and training policy developments.

UNICE Secretary General Philippe de Buck highlighted in particular two issues. He expressed UNICE's support for the Commission Communication regarding the draft 2006 joint progress report on the "Education and Training 2010" work programme. He underlined that education is at the heart of the European strategy for growth and jobs and called for greater momentum for reforms at national level. He also drew attention to the positive results and genuine impact of the social partners' Framework of Actions on lifelong learning and requested that social

partners' actions be better reflected in EU institutions' work and reports.

UNICE also welcomed the discussion on universities launched at the EU Council held at Hampton Court on 27 October 2005. Mr de Buck emphasised the need to develop centres of excellence across the EU. Although it is not desirable to try and create from scratch the equivalent of a European "MIT" (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), we can nevertheless draw valuable lessons from the way in which MIT works with issues such as innovation and patents and use this knowledge to reorganise European universities and centres of research. UNICE also stressed that dialogue between higher education and business should be strengthened.

For further information, please contact [Jeanne Schmitt](#) or [Matthew Higham](#).

SIMPLIFICATION OF REPORTING PROVISIONS OF HEALTH AND SAFETY DIRECTIVES

■ On 26 October 2005, the European Commission launched its second consultation of the social partners on the simplification of the provisions of the health and safety at work directives concerning the reports on their practical implementation. The Commission's main proposals are to require Member States to draw up one single implementation report on all health and safety at work directives that contain reporting obligations in the future, and this at a harmonised interval of every five years. Moreover, the Commission proposes to extend the reporting requirements to directives 2000/54/EC (biological

agents) and 2004/37/EC (carcinogens) and to work on a standard format for the implementation report, together with the Advisory Committee for Safety and Health at Work.

UNICE generally welcomes the Commission's plans to simplify and unify provisions of the health and safety directives concerning practical implementation reports and is currently working on its reply to the second consultation, which will be transmitted to the Commission by 7 December 2005.

For further information, please contact [Natascha Waltke](#).

PORTABILITY OF SUPPLEMENTARY PENSIONS: THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL FOR A DIRECTIVE COULD HARM THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUPPLEMENTARY PENSIONS IN EUROPE

On 20 October 2005, the European Commission published a proposal for a directive on portability of supplementary pension rights aimed at removing obstacles to labour mobility both within and between Member States.

UNICE fully supports the aim of facilitating the cross-border labour mobility within the EU. This is necessary in order to improve the employment situation in Europe. However, at the same time, Europe needs to reform pensions to deal with the ageing of population. It is therefore crucial to ensure that the EU directive does not harm the development of supplementary pensions in Europe.

UNICE believes that the Commission proposal for a directive could fail on both counts. The positive

impact on cross-border mobility is uncertain since major tax obstacles, which are the biggest problem for cross-border portability of supplementary pensions, remain untackled. The impact on the development of supplementary pensions could be negative since the Commission proposal contains provisions which could significantly increase the cost of operating supplementary pension systems. These negative cost implications are due to the imposition of an EU obligation to index “dormant” rights and the setting of EU prescriptions on some national conditions for acquisition of supplementary pension schemes. UNICE is currently preparing a detailed position on the Commission proposal.

For further information, please contact [Lorena Ionita](#).

WORK IN PROGRESS

- UNICE position on the proposal for a directive on supplementary pension schemes
- UNICE response to the Commission consultation on a European Qualifications Framework
- UNICE report on national social partners’ actions to promote the orientations of reference on managing change and its social consequences
- UNICE reply to the second consultation of social partners on simplification of the provisions of health and safety at work directives concerning reports on their practical implementation

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

WTO/DDA: GLOBAL BUSINESS DECLARATION FOR HONG KONG

On 21 November, UNICE concluded negotiations on a far reaching declaration in support of a successful, balanced and ambitious Hong Kong Ministerial Conference with 20 leading business organisations from developed and developing countries from Africa, North and South America, Asia, Australia and Europe. The declaration demonstrates that global business is truly united in support of multilateral trade



liberalisation. In addition to committing to supporting the negotiating process, all 21 business organisations agreed to push for substantial progress in all aspects of the negotiating agenda including agriculture, industrial market access, services, trade facilitation and rules. The signatories will meet in Hong Kong to press their case for progress in the WTO negotiations.

For further information, please contact [Adrian van den Hoven](#) or consult the [joint declaration](#).

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VITH EURO-MEDITERRANEAN BUSINESS SUMMIT

In cooperation with UNICE and the Union of Mediterranean Confederation of Enterprises (UMCE), the Spanish Federation of Employers Organisation (CEOE) hosted in Valencia, on 23 November 2005, the VIth Euro-Mediterranean Business Summit, five days before celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Barcelona Process. It was a large demonstration of Euro-Mediterranean business support for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. With the presence of UNICE Honorary President and Special Representative for the Mediterranean, Mr François Perigot the Euro-Mediterranean business community adopted a final

declaration submitted to the Euro-Mediterranean Heads of State and Government meeting in Barcelona on 27-28 November. A decalogue of business key recommendations to re-launch the Barcelona Process was included in the declaration as well as specific recommendations on three main areas: measures to increase economic growth and employment in Mediterranean countries, the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean free-trade area in 2010, and Euro-Mediterranean business cooperation for promoting joint investment, and developing technological and industrial cooperation.

For further information, please contact [María Soriano Sánchez](#).

PUBLIC PAPER RECENTLY ADOPTED

- [Hong Kong Joint Business Declaration](#): a call for substantial progress towards liberalisation

WORK IN PROGRESS

- UNICE Views on a WTO non-tariff barrier (NTB) arbitration/mediation mechanism

INDUSTRIAL AFFAIRS

UNICE SEMINAR WITH DG ENVIRONMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

UNICE organised a seminar with Mrs C. Day, Director General of DG Environment, on 10 November 2005. The broad topics for the seminar were the 2006 review of the EU Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), on which UNICE has recently published two position papers.

A constructive discussion followed Mrs Day's presentation on Commission's views on the

forthcoming EU ETS review. Mr Campbell presented UNICE's views on this issue. Mr Walthie, DOW, stressed the need for better integration of energy, environment and industry policies, and Mr Høibye gave a presentation on the operation and deployment of CDM. It was agreed to continue a dialogue in the future and Mrs Day's successor and his/her colleagues will be invited to a follow-up seminar next year.

For further information, please contact [Daniel Cloquet](#) or [Miriam Munnich](#).

CLIMATE PROTECTION: UNICE CALLS FOR A MAJOR STEP FORWARD AT THE MONTREAL UNFCCC CONFERENCE

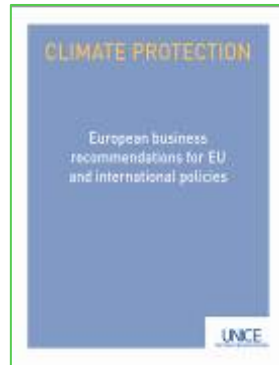


A large UNICE delegation of experts will attend the next UNFCCC (United Nations Convention on Climate Change) conference in Montreal, 28 November – 9 December 2005. A main focus of this meeting will be to launch a process for defining an effective strategy for international cooperation post-2012, when the Kyoto Protocol first commitment period has come to an end.

In view of the Montreal conference, UNICE has prepared a brochure, outlining European industry's views on some key policy issues. Among other things, UNICE stresses the urgent need for a truly comprehensive global agreement for combating climate change and the need to focus on more research and development in order to develop energy efficient technologies, which are essential to reduce emissions in a cost efficient manner.

Furthermore, UNICE underlines that climate change cannot be solved uniquely from an environmental perspective. It must be seen in the

context of other urgent priorities such as energy supply, economic development, quality of life and job creation, in both the near and longer terms. Any future strategy must marry environmental, social and economic realities, and must include support for the most vulnerable countries and people; as well as measures for adaptation to climate change.



In order to achieve the objectives, European industry encourages the use of efficient market instruments including the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), Joint Implementation (JI) and Emissions Trading (ET), created under the Kyoto Protocol. However, major efforts have to be made in order to make the CDM in particular work smoothly and deliver the thousands of projects needed to transfer technology to developing countries and to secure the accompanying credits to assist industrialised countries in meeting their Kyoto Protocol commitments.

For further information, please contact [Daniel Cloquet](#) or [Miriam Munnich](#), consult [UNICE brochure](#) or visit the [UNFCCC conference website](#).

PUBLIC PAPER RECENTLY ADOPTED

- UNICE letter to the Commission regarding the [Thematic Strategy on the Prevention and Recycling of Waste and the revision of the Waste Framework Directive](#)
- UNICE brochure on [climate protection](#)

WORK IN PROGRESS

- UNICE statement on the possible inclusion of the aviation sector in the EU Emission Trading Scheme (ETS)
- UNICE comments on Commission Energy Efficiency Green Paper

ANOTHER SME DOCUMENT? SMEs WANT ACTIONS AND RESULTS!

As Vice President Verheugen released the European Commission's plans for [a modern SME policy](#) on 10 November, Arndt Kirchhoff, Chairman of UNICE's Entrepreneurship & SME Policy Committee (Chairman, owner and CEO of [Kirchhoff Automotive GmbH & Co. KG](#)) said:



Arndt G. Kirchhoff

“We as SMEs are pleased to read documents on SME policy for growth and employment, but as we have consistently said: SMEs don't want documents that just say the right things, we want them to be followed by action and results. We count on Vice-President Verheugen to make the vision of a modern SME policy a reality and assure him that we are ready to engage with policy-makers”.

UNICE supports the Commission's intention to provide a coherent SME policy through streamlining existing instruments. We believe that the areas for action are the rights ones. We look forward to a strengthened dialogue with stakeholders and recommend reinforcing the role of the SME Envoy as 'watchdog' for SME concerns throughout the Commission and to ensure that the 'think small first approach' is adopted in that institution. While the 'quick and easy-to-use consultation mechanism ("SME panel") via the Euro Info Centre' the Commission plans to create may be a useful tool to provide a 'snapshot' on a specific issue of concern to SMEs, such a system cannot usefully and adequately replace business representative organisations like UNICE.

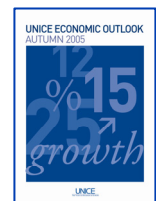
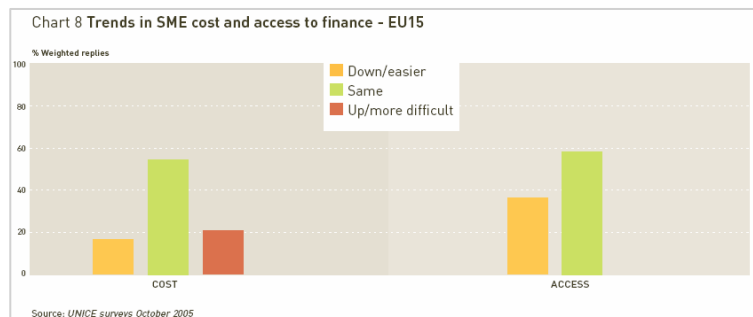
For further information, please contact [David Coleman](#) or consult [UNICE press release](#).

UNICE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK: TRENDS IN SME COST AND ACCESS TO FINANCE

The cost of financing for SMEs is expected to remain favourable in the short term. This stems from low bank lending rates across the maturity spectrum, narrow corporate bond yield spreads and declining cost of equity issuance.

The cost of financing is assessed to remain unchanged in the largest majority of EU countries. However, it is expected to deteriorate slightly in Germany. In contrast, lower costs are reported in the UK, Poland and in Slovenia.

Regarding access to financing, conditions are set to remain broadly unchanged or to improve slightly. In particular, bank lending policies are becoming more supportive in Germany and Italy, while access to financing is also easing in Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia.



For further information, please contact [Marc Stocker](#) or [David Coleman](#) or consult [UNICE Economic Outlook Autumn 2005](#).

PIN BOARD / EVENTS

NEW CHAIRMEN OF WORKING GROUPS

■ Following the departure of Mr Heinz Jeranko (due to retirement), Mr Frans Vreeswijk (Philips Research) takes his place as Chairman of UNICE's Free Movement of Goods Working Group as of 22 November. Also, Mr Jean-Philippe Lacroix from GEFCO (PSA Group) has been appointed new Chairman of UNICE Customs Working Group. Mr Eric van der Starre (Philips International) will act as Vice-Chairman.

We wish both of them all the best leading these UNICE Working Groups.

Your OPINION?

Your comments and/or suggestions are welcome.

Please do not hesitate to e-mail them to our Communication Department at <mailto:unice.news@unice.be>.

For more information about UNICE and its member federations, consult UNICE's website at www.unice.org.