



PRESIDENT SEILLIÈRE DINNER WITH PRESIDENT BARROSO AND JOHN MONKS

On 25 January, UNICE President and Secretary General had dinner with President Barroso and Commissioner Spidla, in the presence of ETUC Secretary General, Mr Monks. Mr Seillière underlined how important the vote in the European Parliament on the services directive would be. He denied any attempt to organise social dumping in the EU as the posting of workers directive already lays down the working conditions in the country of destination. UNICE and ETUC presented to President Barroso and Commissioner Spidla the social partners' agreement on their work programme 2006-2008. Contact: [Philippe de Buck](#)

UNICE MEETS MARTIN BARTENSTEIN, PRESIDENT OF THE COMPETITIVENESS COUNCIL

On 25 January, Ernest-Antoine Seillière and Philippe de Buck had a meeting, in the presence of IV Secretary General, with the Austrian Minister for Economics and Labour and current President of the Competitiveness Council, Mr Martin Bartenstein. President Seillière presented UNICE's expectations for the Competitiveness Council in the months to come, notably concerning important dossiers for the European competitiveness agenda, such as the Services Directive, the Strategy for Growth and Jobs, the need for concrete actions for Europe's entrepreneurs and SMEs, and climate change and energy. [Read more](#) or contact: [Philippe de Buck](#)

PHILIPPE DE BUCK IN A CONFERENCE WITH SEC COMMISSIONER PAUL ATKINS

Meeting Paul Atkins on his visit to Brussels, and in presence of an EFRAG representative, UNICE's Secretary General raised the urgent need for further efforts of convergence between Europe and the US on the accounting standards in order to eliminate the US GAAP reconciliation requirement for foreign companies using IFRS by 2009 at the latest. On the issue of deregistration, he emphasised that listed companies should not remain subject to US reporting requirements unless there is a genuine and continuing interest on US public securities markets. However, qualified institutional buyers do not need the protection of the registration requirements of the US securities law. Contact: [Philippe de Buck](#)

PRESIDENT SEILLIÈRE MEMBER OF THE HLG ON COMPETITIVENESS, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

UNICE President has been nominated as member of the High Level Group on competitiveness, energy and environment which has been set up by the Commission. By setting up this group, the Commission wishes to promote dialogue with industry, relevant stakeholders and representatives of governments and of the European Parliament on issues of high policy priority in areas where competitiveness, energy and environment inter-relate. Contact: [Philippe de Buck](#)

COMPANIES MUST HAVE A STRONG SAY IN THE DEBATE ON EUROPE

Reacting to the presentation of a white paper on communications by the Commission on 1 February, UNICE welcomes the opening of a consultation process to determine the common values and principles which should guide EU communications policy. Yet, good communication depends on content, otherwise the communication is meaningless. Good stories must come first. European companies will engage in the process and come up with constructive proposals to explain Europe and its benefits, and help connect EU citizens with European policies, projects and policy-makers. [Read more](#) or contact: [Maria-Fernanda Fau](#)



EUROPE NEEDS A SERVICES MARKET WITHOUT DELAY

Ahead of the decisive vote on the services directive by the European Parliament, both UNICE President and Secretary General signed a letter to MEPs urging all of them to endorse the main thrust of the IMCO vote. Although introducing substantial changes, many of the compromise amendments by IMCO strike a fair balance and reflect the Committee's firm pledge to facilitate provision of cross-border services and freedom of establishment in the EU without impairing the social fabric of Member States. UNICE has planned several activities, including meetings with key MEPs, to convey the views of European business, and it will do so in full coordination with its national members. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carlos Almaraz](#)

INNOVATION – THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

With Austria and Finland both wanting to make innovation and excellence a top priority during their EU Presidency this year, UNICE member federations IV and EK confirm in a new brochure that "Europe can succeed in a globalised world only through innovation and excellence". The brochure was presented during a high-level reception organised in the Austrian Permanent Representation in Brussels on 25 January with top-level speakers such as Austrian Vice-Chancellor Hubert Gorbach and Minister for Economics and Labour Martin Bartenstein, Commissioner for research Janez Potocnik and UNICE President Ernest-Antoine Seillière. [Read more](#)



POSTING OF WORKERS DIRECTIVE: KEEP TEXT AS IT IS AND GIVE BETTER INFORMATION

Attending a mini-hearing on the posting of workers directive organised by the European Parliament on 26 January, UNICE stressed that this directive remained the appropriate tool to manage social aspects in case of cross-border provision of services and did not need to be revised. This is also the opinion of the social partners in the construction sector. UNICE also strongly pleaded for developing user-friendly information on the legal requirements to be respected by employers when posting a worker in another EU member state. The deficit of information is dramatic and particularly damaging for SMEs wishing to enter new EU markets. [Read more](#) or contact: [Thérèse de Liedekerke](#)

POLICY-MAKERS URGED TO GIVE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY STRONG POLITICAL AND SOCIETAL SUPPORT

At a European Parliament hearing on 31 January, Klaus-Dieter Langfinger, Chairman of UNICE's Patents working group, stressed the need to improve the patent system in Europe concerning a common litigation system and reducing translation costs: UNICE asks Member States to adopt a truly effective Community patent and avoid excessive national considerations, in the interest of patent users and innovation in Europe. [Read more](#) or contact: [Ilias Konteas](#)

TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS: UNICE SUPPORTS STRENGTHENING REGULATORY COOPERATION

UNICE attended the first meeting of the EU-US High Level Regulatory Forum which was held in Brussels on 26 January. The Forum brought together key government officials from the EU and the US to make progress on this key issue for business. UNICE strongly supports this process to gain political guidance and visibility for regulatory cooperation. Contact: [Carlos Gonzalez-Finat](#)