



UNICE MOBILISES TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL SERVICES DIRECTIVE

In order to advocate the views of European business, UNICE and its national members have deployed an intense communication campaign ahead of the plenary vote on 16 February. During a sometimes misleading debate, the directive has been turned into a social problem, which is a wrong approach since it does not seek to deal with social or labour matters which are covered in other Community rules like the posting of workers directive. This has been used by some to strip the directive of much of its value by reducing its scope and protecting national restrictions. The latest deals prepared by the main parties for the plenary's scrutiny, which would allow Member States to impose new restrictions on the free provision of services and reduce even further the scope of the draft directive, prompted an immediate reaction from the business community that feels that the concessions have gone too far ([read more](#)). UNICE, which supports the compromises agreed in the EP Internal Market Committee ([read more](#)), also asked Commissioner McCreevy on 13 February to stand firm and defend the internal market objectives of the directive ([read more](#)). UNICE has had numerous meetings with key members of the European Parliament including M. Harbour, M. Thyssen, R. Goebbels, H.-G. Pöttering and A. Van Lancker, as well as contacts with international and national papers (Financial Times, International Herald Tribune, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and Polish Rzeczpospolita); it has also participated in TV debates on Euronews and CNBC and in high-level meetings with the Austrian Presidency and other interest groups. During the plenary vote in Strasbourg, a UNICE delegation led by Philippe de Buck, UNICE Secretary General, will be present and have contacts with several journalists and MEPs. UNICE and its member federations will assess carefully the outcome of the plenary vote and will report on it shortly. Contact: [Carlos Almaraz](#)

UNICE PROPOSALS ON THE ISSUE OF QUOTAS ON CHINESE TEXTILES IMPORTS

In a letter sent on 9 February to David O'Sullivan, Director General of DG Trade, UNICE Secretary General, Philippe de Buck, insisted that predictability and a good business climate are necessary to enable companies to fulfil their role as efficient economic agents. Companies depend on efficient and clear regulations implemented in a predictable, equitable and consistent manner. EU external trade regulations should therefore be implemented and administered in a way which allows EU manufacturers, importers and exporters to conclude commercial transactions in a climate of predictability and stability. [Read more](#) or contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)

JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE TO COOPERATE FURTHER WITH INDUSTRY

Philippe de Buck, UNICE Secretary General, had a meeting with Roland Schenkel, Director General of the Joint Research Centre, on 9 February. Dr Schenkel highlighted that the JRC intends to extend its work, supporting the regulatory aspects of the Commission's policy portfolio (impact assessments). For this he foresees more of the "pioneering spirit" and "less of the precautionary principle". Furthermore, they discussed how to make Better Regulation, in terms of reducing the administrative burden for companies. Further cooperation between the JRC and industry is foreseen, in particular in the area of energy, environment (especially climate change), product regulation (REACH) and impact assessments. Contact: [Vincent McGovern](#) or [Daniel Cloquet](#)



FOSTERING DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

On 10 February Philippe de Buck met Commissioner Michel and Deputy Head of Cabinet Koen Doens to discuss the Commission's development priorities. UNICE's Secretary General also referred to UNICE's great disappointment at the outcome of the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference. More efforts must be made to link the advantages of development to trade facilitation and markets access for developing as well as for developed countries. On the Africa policy, UNICE and some of its members will support the Commission initiatives to foster business development and trade. Contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)

PORTABILITY OF PENSIONS: DIRECTIVE DRAMATICALLY TO INCREASE COSTS WITH LITTLE BENEFIT

UNICE supports the objective of improving labour mobility across the EU, but has serious concerns about the content of the proposed directive. The positive impact on cross-border mobility is uncertain since tax obstacles, which are the biggest problem, remain. Moreover, the impact on development of supplementary pensions will be negative since the proposal could significantly increase the costs of operating supplementary pension systems. The draft directive should be radically modified. [Read more](#) or contact: [Lorena Ionita](#)

EUROPEAN INDUSTRY PRESENT IN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY HALL OF FAME

Klaus-Dieter Langfinger from BASF, Chairman of UNICE's Patents Working Group, is among the first to be elected to the Intellectual Property Hall of Fame. The IP Hall of Fame has been developed to honour those who have made an outstanding contribution to intellectual property, and to enable the global IP community to explain and demonstrate the importance of IP for the continuing development of the world's economy. [Read more](#) or contact: [Ilias Konteas](#)

EU EMISSIONS TRADING SCHEME AND AVIATION: A CAUTIOUS APPROACH IS RECOMMENDED

On the possible inclusion of the aviation sector in the EU Emission Trading Scheme (ETS), UNICE has published a statement recommending a cautious approach to such inclusion for two main reasons. Firstly, the ETS has not yet fully established itself and therefore any interruption in that process could harm the functioning of the scheme and have negative effects on those industries currently in it. Secondly, the implications of the proposal have not been fully assessed in terms of the impacts on the global competitiveness of Europe. Any inclusion of the aviation sector in the EU ETS must not disadvantage EU business with respect to its global competitors. [Read more](#) or contact: [Miriam Munnich](#)

WHY DO COMPANIES CARE ABOUT EUROPE?

We will try to answer this question on **UNICE Day 2006**, which we are organising on 17 October 2006 in Brussels. Note the date in your diary now and join hundreds of business leaders in demonstrating for competitiveness in Brussels and urging policy-makers to improve competitiveness conditions for companies in Europe.