



UNICE URGES THE COMMISSION TO PUT SOME FLESH BACK ON THE SERVICES DIRECTIVE

In the aftermath of the plenary vote by the European Parliament on 16 February, UNICE reacted with great disappointment on the many changes approved which deprive the directive of much of its value. Due to the misleading new labelling of the proposal as a social directive in some quarters, the directive has been seriously undermined, reducing considerably its scope and diminishing the level of legal certainty that previous versions offered to services providers and their customers. UNICE advocates a rebalancing and has urged the Commission to take its responsibility and analyse carefully the plenary amendments. Only those amendments that contribute to the facilitation of the freedoms of establishment and to provide services should be accepted. UNICE also asks the Commission, before any decision is taken, to carry out an assessment of the economic and legal impact of the numerous changes proposed by the Parliament. The proposed directive must have practical positive effects for growth and employment in Europe. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carlos Almaraz](#)

SERVICES LIBERALISATION IS A PRIORITY ISSUE FOR THE DDA ROUND

Adrian van den Hoven, Director of UNICE International Relations, participated in a large European Services Forum (ESF) mission to the WTO on 14-15 February to explore how to make progress in the WTO DDA Services (GATS) negotiations. Since the Hong Kong Ministerial, WTO Members have been actively engaging in discussions on possible plurilateral services sector negotiations. UNICE and ESF are calling for WTO Members to improve market access in services in the DDA negotiations to create new business opportunities around the world. Contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)

COMPETITIVENESS SHOULD BE THE LEITMOTIV OF COMMISSION'S TRADE STRATEGY

In a letter to Commissioner Mandelson, UNICE's President Ernest Antoine Seillière called for trade and competitiveness to be the leitmotiv of the Commission's trade policy. UNICE supports the Commission's work to vastly improve access to foreign markets in the WTO DDA and in bilateral trade negotiations. For this to occur most effectively, it is essential that EU business is able to present its views on trade policy to the Commission. UNICE also calls on the Trade Commissioner and his administration to play a bigger role in ensuring that internal EU policies foster research, innovation and international competitiveness in Europe. [Read more](#) or contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)

UNICE DAY – WHY DO COMPANIES CARE ABOUT EUROPE?

BRUSSELS, 17 OCTOBER 2006

Note the date in your diary now!



JAPAN: A KEY PARTNER FOR EU BUSINESS

UNICE President Ernest-Antoine Seillière and Secretary General Philippe de Buck met the Japanese Ambassador to the EU, H.E. Mr Kawamura, on 21 February. They discussed a number of key issues for both the EU and Japan including recent economic reforms in Japan, EU enlargement, WTO DDA negotiations, REACH and intellectual property rights (IPR) issues. UNICE informed the Ambassador of joint initiatives that it has launched on WTO DDA, IPR and REACH with Japanese business – especially with Nippon Keidanren. Ambassador Kawamura encouraged UNICE to continue its cooperation with Japanese business in the future. Contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)

EU GROWTH SLOWED DOWN AT THE END OF 2005

According to Eurostat's first indications, growth in the EU25 reached 0.4% in the fourth quarter of 2005, down from 0.6% in the third quarter. However, UNICE is not particularly concerned about these disappointing data, which seem related to technical factors in particular in Germany and France. In general, the business climate has improved in recent months, confirming that Europe is on track for a modest economic recovery this year. UNICE is currently finalising its forecasts for 2006 and 2007 which will be presented in its Spring Economic Outlook to be released on 13 March. The spring report will also feature a business survey on the state of competitiveness in Europe and which identifies the key policy priorities to overcome more fundamental obstacles to growth. Contact: [Marc Stocker](#)

UNICE IN DIALOGUE WITH THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ON AIR QUALITY MEASURES

UNICE met rapporteur Holger Kraemer on 21 February to discuss the EP position on the proposed Directive on Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe. Mr Kraemer said that Parliament is being pressed to make concentration caps more stringent, citing the US example. Regarding the review clause, Mr Kraemer agreed that it should be more open. UNICE [insisted](#) on the need to retain compliance flexibility, as this will allow focus on the most efficient ways to reduce people's exposure to pollution and will help avoid investing large sums of money simply to target hot spots, regardless of exposure. Also, new European research to identify the relationship between air quality and human health and overcome current uncertainties is needed in order to devise the right measures for genuinely efficient air quality policies. Read [more](#) or contact: [Nadine Toscani](#)

UNICE SUPPORTS EUROPEAN YEAR OF MOBILITY

In May 2006, Member States are to decide whether or not they intend to continue applying transitional measures to free movement of workers from the new Member States. Speaking at the conference launching the European Year of mobility on 20 February, UNICE Secretary General Philippe de Buck stressed that free movement of workers is a fundamental freedom guaranteed by the EU Treaty. Restrictions during a transition period established should be as limited as possible. Communicating to alleviate unfounded public fears is also essential. [Read more](#) or contact: [Lorena Ionita](#)