



### UNICE MEETS GÜNTER VERHEUGEN

On 27 February, President Seillière and Mr de Buck described to Mr Verheugen UNICE's expectations concerning development of the Competitiveness Council's work and the spring summit 2006. The discussion examined possible approaches for ensuring that there is sufficient progress on creation of a European services market and in the WTO negotiations. Mr Verheugen described the initiatives that the Commission is considering in order to improve protection of the intellectual property of European, American and Japanese companies. Implementation of REACH and SMEs were also addressed. [Read more](#) or contact: [Philippe de Buck](#)

### PRESIDENT SEILLIÈRE SHARES HIS CONCERNS WITH JOAQUÍN ALMUNIA ON KEY ECONOMIC DOSSIERS

President Seillière sent a strong message of support to the Commission, urging it to take a more active role to move Europe out of its current economic and institutional crisis. Regarding preparation of the European Council in March, UNICE welcomes the Commission's Annual Progress Report and its four proposed policy priorities - innovation, entrepreneurship, responding to globalisation and ageing, and EU energy policy. However, what will count in the short term is the implementation of announced measures. The Commission must further develop its surveillance and benchmarking tools and more vigorously promote best practices. The ongoing economic recovery in Europe is providing a good basis to step up reform efforts, but the window of opportunity could be short-lived. [Read more](#) or contact: [Marc Stocker](#)

### TRANSPORT: ERNEST-ANTOINE SEILLIÈRE MEETS JACQUES BARROT

On 27 February, Mr Seillière had a discussion with Mr Barrot on the mid-term review of the 2001-2010 EU transport strategy. For Mr Barrot, a number of elements of the strategy need to be reassessed, in particular the white paper's "Malthusian" approach pushing for radical restriction of transport growth. Solutions must be found in the cooperation of transport modes, not in opposing them to each other. A new focus must be put on integrated logistical solutions, putting the customer at the centre of policy thinking. UNICE very much welcomes this new approach. The discussion also touched on liberalisation of port services, trans-European transport networks and traffic congestion. [Read more](#) or contact: [Vincent McGovern](#)

### PRESIDENT SEILLIÈRE MEETS RUSSIAN INDUSTRY AND ENERGY MINISTER, VIKTOR KHRISTENKO

Mr Seillière met Minister Khristenko on 28 February to present UNICE's Russian activities and its cooperation with Russian business organisations like the RSPP. At the meeting, several key trade and investment issues were raised including how to implement the common economic space to facilitate trade and investment; strengthening regulatory convergence and energy trade and investment challenges. Mr Khristenko encouraged UNICE to continue to work with business organisations in Russia to develop common views on key trade and investment issues and to keep pushing the EU and Russia to deliver on the Common Economic Space. Contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)

### UNICE IN THE EU HIGH LEVEL GROUP ON COMPETITIVENESS, ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

On 28 February, at the first meeting of the European Commission's new High Level Group on Competitiveness, Energy and the Environment, European industry was represented by Ernest-Antoine Seillière, President of UNICE. "European business strongly supports this initiative that associates a wide spectrum of stakeholders and recognises the links between competitiveness, energy and environment, key elements for Europe's progress", he said. [Read more](#) or contact: [Daniel Cloquet](#)



### UNICE'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON SERVICES AND ENERGY

UNICE's Executive Committee, i.e. Directors-General of member federations, met on 23 February 2006. In a vibrant exchange, members unanimously supported UNICE's disagreement with the final text of the services directive, as voted by the European Parliament, and committed their efforts to ensure a measure which would genuinely open the internal market, and contribute to the strategy for growth and jobs. There was a major debate on energy. Since energy and the environment are so intimately linked, notably in the climate change issue, a coherent EU energy-and-environment policy must incorporate the Competitiveness Council and the new High Level Group in deliberations leading to that policy. The liberalisation of energy markets is the economic basis on which the policy will succeed. Contact: [Carlos Almaraz](#) or [Daniel Cloquet](#)

### DG ENVIRONMENT AIMS TO OPEN POST-2012 CLIMATE CHANGE DEBATE AND CLOSE REACH TALKS

UNICE Secretary General Philippe de Buck had a meeting with Peter Carl, Director General of DG Environment, on 24 February. On climate change, UNICE stressed that it is important that the EU reconsiders its climate diplomacy and the way it addresses the post-2012 issues. Mr Carl stated that the current EU burden sharing approach needed to be fundamentally reviewed in this context. On REACH, Mr Carl acknowledged a good balance had been found with the Council political agreement; the aim is to secure final adoption of REACH under the Finnish Presidency. However, UNICE warned that further fine-tuning is needed, in particular on the complex issue of authorisation. [Read more](#) or contact: [Nadine Toscani](#)

### UNICE MEETS US AND JAPANESE BUSINESS IN TOKYO

Jérôme Chauvin, on behalf of UNICE, leading a European business delegation, on 23 February 2006 attended the sixth meeting of the Industry Trilateral in Tokyo with US and Japanese intellectual property representatives. This group tries to move forward discussions on patent law harmonisation to decrease applicants' costs, promote legal certainty and reduce pendency. He also attended the fifth IP Symposium of Japanese IP association JIPA and had contacts with the Commission delegation in Japan as well as with Japanese business organisation Nippon Keidanren. Contact: [Jérôme Chauvin](#) or [Ilias Konteas](#)

### POSTING OF WORKERS: COMMISSION DRAFT REPORT NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED

Responding to a social partners' consultation on a Commission's services report on the implementation of the posting of workers directive, UNICE reiterated its opposition to a revision of this directive. It emphasised the draft report should be improved to provide factual and up-to-date information on practical implementation issues, explain the legal meaning of the directive and publicise the information contained in the country fact sheets currently under preparation by Member States. [Read more](#) or contact: [Thérèse de Liedekerke](#)

### UNICE AT CONFERENCE ON EFFECTIVE LEGAL REDRESS

On 24 February in Vienna, the Austrian Presidency held an expert conference on the topic of consumer protection through injunctions and class actions. Issues of utmost importance for European companies were discussed and UNICE stated clearly that the debate at EU level should focus on the assessment and, where applicable, the revision of existing instruments before embarking on any new conceptual effort. The legal, economic and societal consequences of introduction of class/collective actions in the EU national legal orders should also be carefully examined. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carlos Almaraz](#)