



### **UNICE CALLS FOR A REAL COMMITMENT TO GROWTH AND JOBS**

As after every Spring Summit, the Council has produced lengthy conclusions on economic reforms. They contain many positive elements such as the emphasis on implementing national reform programmes, or the commitment to reduce the time to start a business to no more than one week by 2007. The European energy policy is also a welcome initiative but it must pursue the right priorities. UNICE calls for the Competitiveness Council, alongside the Energy Council, to be closely involved in energy policy especially on the issue of climate change. European policy-makers must now translate words into real reform policies. [Read more](#) or contact: [Folker Franz](#) on competitiveness or [Daniel Cloquet](#) on energy

### **UNICE MEETS FINNISH AMBASSADOR, MR KOSONEN**

A UNICE delegation chaired by Philippe de Buck, UNICE Secretary General, and with the support of Ulla Sirkeinen, Permanent Delegate of the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK), had a meeting with the Finnish Ambassador, Mr Kosonen, to prepare the EU Finnish Presidency which will focus on implementation of national reform programmes, further evolution of the services directive and preparation of various international summits with ASEAN, China and India. UNICE also discussed the special Tripartite Summit to be held under the Finnish Presidency, calling for UNICE messages to be taken into account when the agenda is being prepared. A meeting between UNICE President and Finnish Prime Minister is already scheduled for 6 July in Helsinki. Contact: [Philippe de Buck](#)

### **FREE MOVEMENT OF WORKERS IS AN ESSENTIAL FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOM**

On 28 March, UNICE participated in the High Level Group on Transitional Arrangements with the social partners. In a declaration published on this occasion, UNICE highlighted that its member federations are overwhelmingly in favour of an immediate lifting of existing restrictions on labour market access for citizens from the new Member States. [Read more](#) or contact: [Lorena Ionita](#)

### **UNICE CALLS ON THE COMMISSION TO FINE-TUNE EP'S WORK ON THE SERVICES DIRECTIVE**

The European Spring Council on 23-24 March sent a strong signal for rapid adoption of the directive on the basis of the amendments adopted by the Parliament. UNICE is deeply worried that the political pressure and the tight timeline envisaged may be detrimental to the quality and value of the directive. In a letter to Commissioner McCreevy, UNICE President Ernest-Antoine Seillière reminds the Commission of its prime responsibility as guardian of the Treaty and its fundamental freedoms, and urges it to come up with a proposal that genuinely delivers for growth and jobs and contributes for the Lisbon objectives and European competitiveness. These concerns were also loudly voiced at the second meeting of the UNICE-ESF European Services Platform on 27 March. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carlos Almaraz](#)

### **UNICE DEMANDS AMBITIOUS TARIFF AND NON-TARIFF BARRIER REDUCTIONS IN THE WTO**

UNICE has called on Trade Commissioner, Peter Mandelson, to pursue an ambitious approach to WTO DDA Industrial Market Access negotiations. UNICE's main message is that emerging countries should open their markets to create a competitive level playing field for European companies. The flip side of this request is that UNICE cannot accept that the European Union pursues a low-ambition approach in the DDA negotiations because of defensive concerns in agriculture. [Read more](#) or contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)



### EUROPEAN COMPETITIVENESS IS KEY IN COMPETITION POLICY

On 23 March, UNICE President Ernest-Antoine Seillière met Commissioner Neelie Kroes. They discussed implementation of a pro-active approach to competition policy which directly contributes to the Lisbon strategy. Competition policy is a key priority for UNICE and its enforcement should aim at applying sound economic analysis of market structures and behaviour to allow companies to compete on merit. President Seillière also took the opportunity to support efforts to strengthen cooperation in the EU in the field of energy and to create a truly open EU market for gas and electricity. [Read more](#) or contact: [Erik Berggren](#)

### MANAGING CHANGE AND ITS SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

In a communication on restructuring published in 2005, the Commission invited the social partners to spread good practices on how to manage change and asked them to report to the EU Council in March 2006. A UNICE report on actions taken by national social partners now summarises 30 initiatives from 23 countries demonstrating the commitment of UNICE member federations to promote results of the EU social dialogue across Europe. It testifies to the wealth of activities by social partners to manage change and its social consequences. [Read more](#) or contact: [Thérèse de Liedekerke](#)

### UNICE IN WASHINGTON

Jérôme Chauvin, on behalf of UNICE, led a European business delegation participating in an intellectual property summit on counterfeiting organised by the US Chamber of Commerce on 21-22 March 2006 in Washington. This was the second meeting of a platform composed of American, Japanese and European industries that is discussing counterfeiting and joining forces on common actions. A special focus was placed on China during this meeting. Jérôme Chauvin also met representatives of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to present UNICE's message that the SEC proposal concerning deregistration needs to be improved in order to provide a real delisting option for those companies which wish to make use of this facility. Contact: [Jérôme P. Chauvin](#)

### UNICE INSISTS ON CLARITY IN LEGISLATION ON WASTE

A small UNICE delegation met Caroline Jackson, Member of the European Parliament and rapporteur for the Waste Framework Directive, on 22 March to discuss industry's position regarding the revision of the directive. The discussion focused in particular on how to ensure legal clarity in the directive, to avoid different interpretations in the EU Member States and how to qualify when waste ceases to be waste. [Read more](#) or contact: [Nadine Toscani](#) or [Miriam Munnich](#)

### EFRAG IS THE "VOICE OF ACCOUNTING IN EUROPE"

The European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG), of which UNICE is a founding father, signed formal working arrangements with the Commission on 23 March, in the presence of Commissioner McCreevy and UNICE Secretary General Philippe de Buck. EFRAG will continue to advise the Commission on the endorsement and interpretation of International Financial Reporting Standards, the development and improvement of standards and their effective implementation. Contact: [Folker Franz](#)