



### **MODIFIED SERVICES DIRECTIVE: COMMISSION ACCEPTS A DRASTICALLY NARROWED TEXT**

On 4 April the European Commission issued a revised services directive, largely mirroring the version agreed by the European Parliament in February which proposed substantial changes to the Commission's original proposal. Reacting to the revised text, UNICE asked for a broader scope of the directive and for more legal certainty. The expected objectives of growth and employment call for a directive covering as many sectors as possible and ensuring adequate legal certainty. Despite some improvements regarding the freedom of establishment, provisions on transparency and screening of national requirements and administrative cooperation between authorities, UNICE regrets that the Commission has not improved the legal quality of article 16 dealing with cross-border provision of services. The wording agreed remains too vague and will necessitate abundant jurisprudence to clarify its meaning. UNICE is also disappointed about the drastically reduced scope of the directive, namely the exclusion without any justification of temporary agency work. On the same day, the Commission also published a communication on the posting of workers directive. It describes which national control measures are accepted by existing European jurisprudence and highlights the need for Member States to improve information and step up their administrative cooperation. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carlos Almaraz](#) on services or [Thérèse de Liedekerke](#) on posting of workers

### **UNICE DISCUSSES BUSINESS PRIORITIES WITH DG ENTERPRISE AND INDUSTRY**

UNICE Secretary General Philippe de Buck, heading a group of UNICE experts, received a delegation from DG Enterprise and Industry, led by its Director General Heinz Zourek, on 3 April to review and discuss current priorities covering, among other things, the services directive, industrial policy, intellectual property, WTO discussions, SME policy and REACH. Each party agreed to continue their effective cooperation with the objective of achieving growth and jobs in a competitive Europe. Contact: [Philippe de Buck](#)

### **BUSINESS LEADERS MEET IN PARIS: FUTURE OF EUROPE – WHAT ROLE FOR BUSINESS TO PLAY?**

How to get the European Union out of its institutional and economic crisis? What role will business play in that debate? How will the European business community have to be organised in order to have a strong voice in the discussions on Europe's future? On 7 April, after a special meeting on these issues with his fellow Presidents from UNICE's member federations, UNICE President Ernest-Antoine Seillière will hold a press conference in Paris at 12.30 hrs. Contact: [Maria Fernanda Fau](#)

### **UNICE ASKS FOR A CLEARLY DEFINED AND PROACTIVE EU POLICY FOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

In its response to the Commission consultation on a future patent policy in Europe, UNICE insists that a strong R&D policy based on an effective patent system accessible to all innovators is essential for Europe's general interest. In addition, UNICE urges for improvements in the current patent system in Europe in terms of costs and legal certainty. [Read more](#) or contact: [Ilias Konteas](#)



### **UNICE ALERTS MEMBER STATES AND EP RAPPORTEURS TO REACH CHALLENGES FOR COMPANIES**

The Austrian Presidency held a conference on REACH on 30-31 March in Vienna. Main purpose was to address the remaining items to be solved during the second reading and to compile expectations from stakeholders. UNICE focused on three key items: (1) is it still possible in terms of legislative adjustments to deliver a more workable REACH, in particular for authorisation; (2) even if alleviated, the economic impacts of REACH will be detrimental to enterprises competitiveness, and (3) to ensure successful implementation helpdesks and guidance will have to be provided by both public authorities and business organisations. The Finnish Presidency has indicated its wish to adopt REACH by the end of the year, hence avoiding a conciliation procedure. [Read more](#) or contact: [Jean-Paul Mingasson](#) or [Nadine Toscani](#)

### **HIGH LEVEL GROUP ON COMPETITIVENESS, ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT: WORK HAS STARTED**

The four ad hoc groups created by the Commission's High Level Group on competitiveness, energy and the environment met in the week of 27 March to examine the following issues: functioning of electricity and gas markets; EU emissions trading scheme; competitiveness and access to cost-effective energy inputs for energy-intensive industries; energy efficiency. Daniel Cloquet, Director of UNICE Industrial Affairs Department, and a good number of experts took part in the work. The meetings illustrated that the conditions are not currently met for the EU emissions trading scheme to generate a sufficient amount of environmental benefits, in particular at the level of electricity production, in a way that is cost-effective for the business world as a whole. Solutions will have to be found to remedy this situation. Contact: [Daniel Cloquet](#)

### **UNICE SUPPORTS NEW POLICY FOR ABUSE OF MARKET POWER**

On 31 March, UNICE submitted its reaction to the DG Competition discussion paper on the application of Article 82 EC to exclusionary abuses. UNICE supports a review of the rules on abuse of market power which should be applied in ways which support economic growth. Enforcement of Article 82 should aim at applying sound economic analysis of market structures and behaviour that takes efficiencies into account in a single-step analysis to allow companies to compete on merit. [Read more](#) or contact: [Erik Berggren](#)

### **COMMISSION PLANS FOR CCCTB ON TRACK, COMMISSIONER KOVÁCS TELLS UNICE**

László Kovács, EU Commissioner responsible for taxation, exchanged ideas with the UNICE Fiscal Affairs Group on 30 March. He stressed that the reduction of tax obstacles in the internal market was a crucial element of the growth and jobs strategy. A common consolidated corporate tax base (CCCTB) is important in this respect: while it would not reduce the tax burden of companies or the tax revenue of administrations, it will make competition more transparent, the Commissioner argued. The Commission will table a stock-taking report in early April and is planning a legislative proposal for 2008. Contact: [Barbara Stearns-Blasing](#)