



PRESIDENT SEILLIÈRE MEETS BELGIAN PRIME MINISTER GUY VERHOFSTADT

Ernest-Antoine Seillière, UNICE President, Philippe de Buck, UNICE Secretary General, and Rudi Thomaes, Director General of the Federation of Belgian Enterprises FEB-VBO, met Belgian Prime Minister, Mr Guy Verhofstadt, on Thursday 20 April. The main item of discussion was the future of Europe and the ideas developed by the Prime Minister in his book entitled “The United States of Europe”. As is well known, Mr Verhofstadt presents in this book the idea of concentric circles in Europe, one comprising the countries belonging to the euro zone. President Seillière presented UNICE’s priorities, stressing that they should be implemented in the EU as a whole. Contact: [Philippe de Buck](#)

PRESIDENT SEILLIÈRE IN LITHUANIA

In his first year as UNICE President, Mr Seillière was the guest of the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists – LPK – on 24 and 25 April 2006. In a very complete visit to Vilnius, Mr Seillière had the opportunity to discuss with the Board of LPK the main items on the European agenda in 2006. Furthermore, and accompanied by LPK President, Mr Bronislovas Lubys, he met Lithuanian Prime Minister, Mr Algirdas Brazauskas, to share with him European business priorities. Finally, and in front of an audience of members of the Lithuanian government, members of LPK and businessmen, President Seillière was the guest speaker in the forum “What should be done to rebuild competitiveness of Europe?”. [Read more](#) or contact: [Philippe de Buck](#)

UNICE MEETS SENIOR COMMISSION OFFICIALS, URGES AMBITIOUS CONCLUSION OF DOHA ROUND

On 24 and 25 April, UNICE met key officials in the Commission’s Trade Directorate General, Mr David O’Sullivan, Director General and Mr Peter Balazs, Deputy Director General. As the Doha Round nears its conclusion, UNICE reiterated the importance of ambitious results in Doha Round negotiations on market access for industrial goods and services for European competitiveness, growth and jobs. Contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)





UNICE APPOINTS NEW SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR MEDITERRANEAN AFFAIRS

On Monday 24 April, UNICE Honorary President Mr François Perigot officially stepped down after seven years service as UNICE Special Representative for Mediterranean Affairs. To maintain UNICE's long-standing commitment to better Euro-Mediterranean relations a new Special Representative, Mr Ulysses Kyriacopoulos, President of the Federation of Greek Industries, has been appointed. President Kyriacopoulos represented UNICE in the Union of Mediterranean Confederations of Enterprises (UMCE) General Assembly on 25 April in Malta. Contact: [Carlos Gonzalez-Finat](#)

UNICE RECALLS INDUSTRY'S CONSIDERABLE COMMITMENTS TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY

At a public hearing on 20 April organised by Mr Krahmer, the European Parliament Rapporteur on the air quality directive, UNICE underlined that companies are investing considerable efforts to improve air quality. While the Commission supports uniform air quality targets, industry as well as municipalities and regions insist on the need for some flexibility that would acknowledge efforts deployed so far. It would be unfair to penalise cities or companies that already have emissions reduction plans in place. This aspect is well reflected in Mr Krahmer's report. Industry also advised to continue scientific in order research better to understand the relationship between sources and exposure before deriving highly ambitious policies, and hence ensuring cost-efficient and targeted measures. [Read more](#) or contact: [Nadine Toscani](#)

UNICE CAUTIOUS ABOUT ENCOURAGING LITIGATION FOR ANTITRUST INFRINGEMENTS

On 21 April, UNICE submitted its reaction to the Commission's Green Paper on damages actions for breach of EC antitrust rules. UNICE recognises that the public and private enforcement of antitrust rules is fundamental for creating and sustaining a competitive economy but doubts whether encouraging more litigation is the right way forward. Competition law is a relatively complex area of law which involves a lot of economics, and more court actions would increase chances of divergent decision-making with obvious negative implications for the integrity of the internal market and the ability of companies to compete on merit. Apart from this, there are other disadvantages of increased litigation. Significant transaction costs serve no public interest objective and the uncertainty and burdens brought about by more court actions could also lead to companies avoiding new forms of innovative and pro-competitive behaviour to the detriment of their competitiveness. [Read more](#) or contact: [Erik Berggren](#)

NEW CONTACTS IN UNICE

We have the pleasure to announce that Mr [Eoin O'Malley](#) joined the International Relations Department on 18 April as an Adviser. He will deal inter alia with issues linked to the USA, Mercosur and export controls. In the Industrial Affairs Department, Ms [Cynthia Giancola](#) started on 18 April as Secretary, replacing Ms [Patrizia Troisi](#) who will start working in the Ecofin Department on 2 May 2006.