



Wednesday, 17 May 2006

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### **UNICE IN STRASBOURG: ONGOING SUPPORT FOR EU CONSTITUTION**

UNICE President Ernest-Antoine Seillière and Secretary General Philippe de Buck have been meeting a number of MEPs this week in Strasbourg. Besides normal efforts to explain the views of European industry on legislation and policies to policy-makers, the purpose of this visit was to show the ongoing support of business for the EU Constitution. President Seillière explained to MEPs from a wide range of political groups and countries that it is necessary for European decision-makers to “get us out of the current mess” and show possible ways for better and more efficient European governance which can deliver the promises made to Europeans. Contact: [Philippe de Buck](#)

### **A STEP FORWARD BASED ON MERITS**

UNICE is supportive of the Commission’s assessments of Romania and Bulgaria and acknowledges the enormous progress that has been made. It calls on Bulgaria and Romania to continue their progress in three key areas: strengthening the rule of law; modernising custom procedures and ensuring full application of EU product safety standards. Contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)

### **IMF INVITES UNICE TO DISCUSS POLICY CHALLENGES IN THE EURO AREA**

On 12 May, in preparation to the IMF annual report on the euro area economy, European Director Michael Deppler met a UNICE delegation headed by Secretary General Philippe de Buck. UNICE emphasised that the causes of weak growth in recent years - a dismal productivity performance and high household savings – were rooted in a lack of preparedness in the face globalisation and ageing. Unsustainable public finances, burdensome regulations, insufficient support to innovation and inflexible labour markets have become unbearably costly, and these issues will need to be addressed without further delay. This calls in particular for the immediate implementation of National Reform Programmes, strengthened economic coordination including in the Eurogroup, and a vigorous defence of internal market principles. Contact: [Marc Stocker](#)

### **FOUR YEARS OF JOINT WORK TO BOOST LIFELONG LEARNING**

To be fit for future jobs, European workers need higher skill levels, and up-to-date and adaptable competences. In order to respond to these challenges, alleviate obstacles to companies’ competitiveness and raise the employability of workers, the European social partners have been coordinating their actions in the field of lifelong learning since 2002. On 18 May, they will present the results of their joint work to the Troika of Education Ministers and the European Commissioner for Education Ján Figel’. [Read more](#) or contact: [Matthew Higham](#)

### **CHINA: EU POLICY SHOULD HAVE COMPETITIVENESS AS ITS CORE OBJECTIVE**

China represents a hugely important and rapidly growing market for European business, but competition from Chinese companies is also putting new pressure on EU business. To tackle this issue, in the context of preparation of the new EU economic strategy for China, UNICE calls for a more resolute EU policy and expects the Commission to focus on promoting access to the Chinese market, ensuring effective protection for EU investment, and pushing for effective enforcement of intellectual property rights. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carlos González-Finat](#)



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### **EU CONTRACT LAW: WHAT DOES THE COMMISSION REALLY INTEND TO DO?**

UNICE does not object to the idea of creating a common frame of reference if it provides greater coherence in contract law and help the internal market function. However, UNICE has criticisms about the consultation process and content of the drafts prepared by researchers. The Commission should improve the information and management of the project, set out its priorities clearly and define the policy objectives. UNICE, represented by Dr Paul Hobeck, General Counsel at Siemens AG, will voice these comments at the Conference “European Contract Law: the review of the Consumer Acquis and the Common Frame of Reference” organised by the Austrian Presidency on 25 and 26 May in Vienna. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carlos Almaraz](#)

### **LEGAL MIGRATION: EMPLOYERS SUPPORT ONE-STOP SHOP FOR GRANTING PERMITS**

In a UNICE position adopted on 10 May, employers call for the Commission policy plan on legal migration to lead to rapid, transparent and simple procedures. They support the idea of a one-stop shop for entry, residence and work permits. A single, horizontal framework should deal with highly skilled workers, seasonal workers, intra-corporate transferees and remunerated trainees. Third-country nationals already legally working in a Member State should be allowed to apply for a work permit in another EU country without first going back to their country of origin. UNICE also recalls that any EU initiative must respect the fact that decisions on the number of migrants to be admitted and their skills or country of origin remain national. Hence, the need to clarify what an EU work permit or EU green card would mean. [Read more](#) or contact: [Thérèse de Liedekerke](#)

### **INCLUSION ON LABOUR MARKETS: UNICE OPPOSES EU LEGAL INSTRUMENT ON MINIMUM INCOME**

Replying to a Commission consultation on the inclusion of people furthest from the labour market, UNICE agrees that labour market integration is the best safeguard against social exclusion. However, employers believe that the focus on minimum income schemes is too narrow and call for a broader policy approach. The EU should use the open method of coordination to organise exchanges of experience on how to strengthen to promote labour market participation and is against the introduction of an EU legal instrument on minimum incomes. [Read more](#) or contact: [Thérèse de Liedekerke](#)

### **UNICE CALLS FOR FURTHER CLARITY IN EUROPEAN WASTE LEGISLATION**

UNICE has developed views regarding key areas where waste legislation needs further clarification, in particular to define when waste ceases to be waste and to avoid different interpretations in EU Member States. These views will be shared with Members of the European Parliament, who will consider draft reports on the Thematic Strategy on the prevention and recycling of waste as well as on the revision of the Waste Framework Directive on 12-13 July, amend them by 5 September, vote in the Environment Committee on 10 October and vote in Plenary in November. Contact: [Nadine Toscani](#) or [Miriam Munnich](#)

### **ACCOUNTING STANDARDS: UNICE REPRESENTS COMPANIES' VIEWS AT THE COMMISSION ROUNDTABLE**

On 17 May, at the first meeting of the Informal Roundtable on Consistent Application of IFRS, i.e. of the accounting standards in use for listed companies in the EU, experts from stakeholders such as auditors, national standard-setters, financial supervisors, and companies had a first discussion to try and identify accounting issues which could become problematic in terms of their consistent application in the EU. UNICE's official representative is Mr Peter Sampers, Vice-Chairman of the UNICE Accounting Working Group. Contact: [Folker Franz](#)