



Wednesday, 31 May 2006

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### **COMPETITION POLICY IS A KEY PRIORITY FOR UNICE**

On 30 May, UNICE Secretary General Philippe de Buck met senior DG Competition staff and Director General Philip Lowe to exchange views on EU competition policy. 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. Philippe de Buck 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. In addition, he stressed the need for modernised and enhanced state aid rules to encourage innovation. Contact: [Erik Berggren](#)

### **SERVICES DIRECTIVE: LET'S MAKE THE BEST OF IT!**

Now that a political agreement has been reached in the Competitiveness Council, UNICE acknowledges that legislative discussion on this proposal is coming to an end. Progress has been made, and UNICE is particularly pleased with the screening and notification process for national requirements that can be imposed on providers. However, it still regrets the excessively reduced scope of the directive. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carlos Almaraz](#)

### **EUROPEAN TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE: REPRESENTATIVENESS IS A KEY ISSUE**

UNICE Secretary General Philippe de Buck has met Commission Vice-President Siim Kallas who is in charge of the European Transparency Initiative. UNICE and its members have welcomed the initiative in the light of better regulation, early consultation and more generally, improved transparency of the EU's decision-making process. Mr Kallas agreed with us that the issue of representativeness is of key importance. UNICE argued that all stakeholders involved should put their cards on the table regarding whom they represent and how they are financed, and that a certain level of expertise should be a minimum requirement for consultation. We will participate in the consultation process which is open until 31 August and give answers to the six sets of questions the Commission has put forward in its Green Paper. Contact: [Christian Feustel](#)

### **ALLIANCE FOR A COMPETITIVE EUROPEAN INDUSTRY ORGANISES A SEMINAR ON INDUSTRIAL POLICY**

With the aim of giving extra stimulus to the development of EU industrial policy, the Alliance for a Competitive European Industry – of which UNICE is a member – is organising a seminar entitled “The new European industrial policy: from commitment to results”. This seminar will be held in Brussels in the morning of **15 September**. It will bring together a large public of decision-makers in the Council's Charlemagne Conference Centre, including Commission Vice-President Verheugen, MEPs, representatives of Member States, personalities from industry and other stakeholders. The seminar will focus on the two following themes: (1) creating the right business framework in the single market, and (2) industrial policy as a tool to face the challenges of the global market. An important date to note in your diary. Contact: [Daniel Cloquet](#)



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### **IMPROVING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT THROUGH MODERNISED CUSTOMS PROCEDURES**

UNICE, together with AMCHAM EU, EEA, EUROPRO and IRU, is organising on 27 June in Brussels the Conference “European customs in a changing world”. This conference offers a timely opportunity to explore the key developments and future direction of European customs policy. The event will gather senior officials from the European Commission including Commissioner Kovács and Director General Verrue; the EU Member States; and business representatives including UNICE Secretary General Philippe de Buck. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carlos Gonzalez-Finat](#)

### **PROPOSED FUTURE APPROACH FOR INNOVATION STATE AID DISAPPOINTING**

UNICE Secretary General Philippe de Buck has written to Competition Commissioner Neelie Kroes to express concerns about the proposed future approach in the area of state aid for innovation. UNICE agrees that state aid policy should contribute to a more innovative economy but doubts whether the proposed approach is appropriate for meeting the challenge of achieving the Lisbon and Barcelona objectives. [Read more](#) or contact: [Erik Berggren](#)

### **EQUAL PAY: LABOUR MARKET DESEGREGATION IS THE ANSWER TO BRIDGE THE GENDER PAY GAP**

On 22 May, UNICE participated in a conference on equal pay for women and men organised in Brussels by the Austrian presidency. In the closing panel, UNICE recalled that equal pay is one of the four priorities of the framework of actions on gender equality adopted by the European social partners last year. Pay differentials are a feature of market economies and perfectly legitimate in most cases. Differences in average pay levels of women and men are the symptom of remaining gender differences rather than a sign of discrimination. The answer lies in integrated strategies to desegregate labour markets. “Overcoming stereotyped gender roles or education choices and addressing difficulties in combining work and family life is as important as checking the gender neutrality of pay systems if we want to make further progress in bridging the gender pay gap” said Thérèse de Liedekerke, Social Affairs Director. [Read more](#) or contact: [Jeanne Schmitt](#)

### **NEW APPROACH NEEDED TO ENGAGE ALL IN COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE POST-2012**

Mr d’Adda, Chairman of UNICE Industrial Affairs Committee, recommended during the IETA/CEPS conference on 30 May, that the international post-2012 policy framework for combating climate change should be based on a new managerial approach with multi-stakeholder cooperation on specific themes engaging both developed and developing countries. As an example of a useful managerial approach, he quoted the “Clean, Clever and Competitive” report published earlier this year. He also highlighted the importance of evaluating the actual results of cooperation before setting any indicative EU objectives for reducing greenhouse gases. [Read more](#) or contact: [Daniel Cloquet](#) or [Miriam Munnich](#)