



Wednesday, 28 June 2006

No. 2006-24

PRESIDENT SEILLIÈRE MEETS COMMISSIONER FERRERO-WALDNER

UNICE President Ernest-Antoine Seillière met the Commissioner for EU external relations Mrs Ferrero-Waldner on 26 June. He underlined UNICE's full support to make Europe competitive in the globalised world and a strong actor on the international scene. European business is ready to further contribute to the Commission's EU External Relations agenda to help reinforce economic relations with key EU partners. Priority areas for UNICE remain Transatlantic relations, Russia, China, Japan and India. UNICE also supports the strengthening of economic relations with EU neighbours in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy. Contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)

ENVIRONMENT: PRESIDENT SEILLIÈRE MEETS COMMISSIONER DIMAS

On 26 June Mr Seillière met Commissioner Dimas in order to take stock of the work of the High Level Group on competitiveness, energy and the environment; development of EU climate policy; REACH and EU waste policy. Mr Seillière presented UNICE's main recommendations on these issues, as summarised in a note handed over to the Commissioner. [Read more](#) or contact: [Daniel Cloquet](#) or [Nadine Toscani](#)

EU CUSTOMS POLICY MUST CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMPETITIVENESS OF EUROPEAN BUSINESS

In a UNICE conference jointly organised with AMCHAM EU and other partners on 27 June in Brussels, UNICE Secretary General Philippe de Buck called on the Commissioner responsible for customs, Mr Kovács, to fully address the competitiveness of European business when developing new customs legislation. UNICE supports EU-harmonised, simpler and faster customs procedures contributing to trade facilitation. Mr de Buck pointed out UNICE's concerns about the draft implementing provisions of the Community Customs Code and called for further significant improvements. Contact: [Carlos Gonzalez-Finat](#)

THE INTERNAL MARKET IS NOT COMPLETE OR SUFFICIENTLY WELL KNOWN

In its [response](#) to the Commission's consultation on the future Internal Market Policy, UNICE calls for rapid action from the European institutions and Member States to step up the completion of the Internal Market and awareness about it. A well-functioning and dynamic Internal Market is vital for the EU growth and jobs strategy and a key instrument in the debate on Europe and its citizens. Four key concepts: completion, enforcement, efficiency and awareness are essential if the European Internal Market is to respond to the challenges of globalisation, ageing population and slow-growing economies. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carlos Almaraz](#) or [Vincent McGovern](#)



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PORTABILITY OF PENSION RIGHTS: DISCUSSIONS INTENSIFY

With the publication of the draft report by the European Parliament Employment Committee, discussions on the directive on pensions portability are intensifying. UNICE will meet Ms Ria Oomen-Ruijten on 29 June 2006 and ask for the necessary change of approach to ensure that the EU proposal effectively lifts obstacles to cross-border mobility without hampering the development of supplementary pension schemes. The main improvements sought by UNICE were also highlighted on 20 June, during the 25th anniversary of the European organisation for supplementary pension funds, EFRP, and were widely shared by the pension providers. [Read more](#) or contact: [Steven d'Haeseleer](#)

PROPOSAL FOR A DIRECTIVE ON SHAREHOLDERS' RIGHTS NEEDS FINE-TUNING

In the context of the discussions being held at the Council and Parliament on the Commission proposal for a directive on shareholders' rights, UNICE released a position paper on 20 June. Although UNICE supports the thrust of the Commission proposal, it requests some fine-tuning on issues such as the definition of shareholder, minimum notice period and distinction for convening extraordinary general meetings and annual general meetings. [Read more](#) or contact: [Marta Alegrias](#)

REVIEWED TRANSPORT POLICY SEEKS TO OPTIMISE PERFORMANCE OF EACH MODE

The Commission released its long-awaited mid-term review of the 2001 Transport White Paper on 22 June. The views outlined in the review are recognition that mobility of goods and persons is an essential component for the competitiveness of European industry and services. Its advocating of policy which aims at optimising the performance of each transport mode and their combined use is a positive step forward as it puts inter-modality rather than modal shift at the heart of future transport policy. In support of this transformed approach to transport policy, President Seillière has offered Commissioner Barrot UNICE's active assistance in pursuing this more realistic European approach to transport policy. Contact: [Vincent McGovern](#)

EUROPEAN BUSINESS SUPPORTS THE EUROPEAN PRIVATE COMPANY STATUTE

On 25 June, the European Parliament Legal Affairs Committee organised a hearing on the European private company statute. UNICE has always supported the initiative of creating a legal form which offers a more flexible European legal form than the *societas europaea* which is beyond the reach of SMEs. UNICE was represented by Joëlle Simon, from the French business confederation MEDEF, who explained why this specific legal form, which should be open and based on contractual freedom, is of extreme importance for SMEs that want to promote their European dimension. [Read more](#) or contact: [Marta Alegrias](#)



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MARKET ACCESS NEGOTIATIONS: UNICE VERY DISAPPOINTED WITH THE LITTLE PROGRESS ACHIEVED

UNICE is very disappointed with the latest developments in the WTO non-agricultural market access (NAMA) negotiations. Just days before a key trade ministers' meeting in Geneva, WTO Members remain incapable of reaching an agreement on language for the modalities of the NAMA negotiations. Very little progress has been made since the Hong Kong WTO Ministerial and time is running out. UNICE's support for the round is conditional on achieving significant new commercial opportunities through substantial cuts in applied tariffs and the elimination of non-tariff barriers. An OECD-only round in which the emerging countries contribute little or nothing would be unacceptable. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carlos Gonzalez-Finat](#)

UNICE PRIORITIES FOR THE DDA TRADE FACILITATION NEGOTIATIONS

With a view to contributing to the crucial phase of the WTO Trade Facilitation negotiations, UNICE has underlined its strong support for a legally binding multilateral agreement on trade facilitation. A WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, which would create a level playing field for all WTO members, should be reviewable to encourage WTO members to move gradually towards higher customs standards. Key priorities for UNICE are minimisation of border fees and charges, appeal procedures for customs disputes, publication of trade regulations, and simplified procedures for customs clearance. [Read more](#) or contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)

EU AND US INDUSTRY VOICE SUPPORT TO JOINT EU-US IP ENFORCEMENT STRATEGY

UNICE together with US Chamber of Commerce, TABD, AIM, IFPI and other European and US business organisations welcomed the joint EU-US action strategy on enforcement of intellectual property rights adopted on 21 June 2006. The strategy focuses on collaborative actions in the areas of customs, the creation of joint enforcement teams in third countries, information and public awareness campaigns and increased collaboration with the private sector. It also highlights the need to work with priority countries, namely China and Russia. Industry expressed its commitment to work together with the EU and US to contribute to the success of the strategy. [Read more](#) or contact: [Ilias Konteas](#)