



Wednesday, 27 September 2006

No. 2006-30

### UNICE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY GENERAL VISIT COPENHAGEN

Under the provocative title of “Mission Possible” the Confederation of Danish Industries (DI) on 26 September hosted in Copenhagen its annual conference with UNICE President Ernest-Antoine Seillière as guest speaker. Mr Seillière gave an address on the overall opportunities and threats that Europe is facing in global competition with special attention to the labour force challenge. The President and Mr de Buck also discussed bilaterally with President Vorsholt and Director General Neergaard Larsen of the Confederation of Danish Employers (DA) on the main European and Danish priorities for the coming months. Furthermore, an in-depth discussion took place with Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Per Stig Moeller. [Read more](#) or contact: [Philippe de Buck](#)

### UNICE MEETS PRESIDENT OF COMPETITIVENESS COUNCIL

Ahead of the first official Competitiveness Council under the Finnish EU Presidency on 25 September, a UNICE/EK delegation headed by Philippe de Buck met Mauri Pekkarinen, Finnish Minister of Trade and Industry and current President of the Competitiveness Council. They exchanged views on the issues UNICE had put forward one week before in a letter to Mr Pekkarinen on the occasion of the Competitiveness Council meeting, notably innovation, the Internal Market strategy and consumer policy. UNICE also reiterated its call for the Competitiveness Council to start cooperating with other Council formations on climate change policy. [Read more](#) or contact: [Folker Franz](#)

### EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN UNICE AND THE CHAIR OF THE EP INTERNAL MARKET COMMITTEE

Following the letter by Arlene McCarthy published in the Financial Times on 21 September in which the chairwoman of the EP Internal Market Committee referred to UNICE's stance on the services directive, there was an exchange of letters between UNICE Secretary General Philippe de Buck and Mrs McCarthy. UNICE sent a response letter that was published in the same newspaper on 25 September. It aimed at clarifying UNICE's view on the services directive as it now stands after the political compromise and pinpoints the difficulties it will encounter in the transposition and implementation phase. The letter also stresses the importance of the internal market for companies and the need for improvement. Philippe de Buck also wrote to Mrs McCarthy and forwarded to her several documents illustrating European business views and difficulties in the internal market and presenting proposals for the way forward. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carlos Almaraz](#)

### UNICE DAY, 17 OCTOBER 2006 – HAVE A LOOK AT THE PROGRAMME AND REGISTER!

UNICE DAY TUESDAY 17 OCTOBER 2006 ESPACE FLAGEY BRUSSELS

EUROPE

➤ WHY DO COMPANIES CARE ABOUT EUROPE?

JOIN US TO HAVE A STRONG SAY IN THE DEBATE ON EUROPE

The graphic features a blue background with the word 'EUROPE' in large, white, stylized letters. To the right, the text 'WHY DO COMPANIES CARE ABOUT EUROPE?' is written in white. At the bottom, a white banner contains the text 'JOIN US TO HAVE A STRONG SAY IN THE DEBATE ON EUROPE'. Above the main graphic, a yellow banner reads 'UNICE DAY TUESDAY 17 OCTOBER 2006 ESPACE FLAGEY BRUSSELS'. A small version of the six-colored square logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the graphic.



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### **A STEP FORWARD BASED ON MERITS, BUT IS THE EU PREPARED?**

UNICE, the Confederation of European Business, is supportive of Commission's assessments of Romania and Bulgaria as published on 26 September, and acknowledges the enormous progress that has been made in both countries. They should continue to work on enforcement of their legal and economic reforms at the local and national levels. [Read more](#) or contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)

### **UNICE AT THE 6<sup>TH</sup> EURO-MEDITERRANEAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON INDUSTRY**

On 21-22 September in Rhodes, UNICE and the Union of Mediterranean Confederation of Enterprises (UMCE) were represented at the highest level at the 6<sup>th</sup> Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Industry by Mr [Ulysses Kyriacopoulos](#), UNICE Special Representative for Mediterranean Affairs, and Mr Omer Sabanci, UMCE President. Mr Kyriacopoulos voiced for Euro-Mediterranean Ministers the point of view of the private sector on how to meet the challenges of globalisation and the opportunities for the South Mediterranean countries under the European neighbourhood policy. He also clearly explained the importance of attracting foreign direct investment as a driver to address the challenge of globalisation. Euro-Mediterranean business expectations were submitted to the Euro-Mediterranean Ministers in a joint UNICE-UMCE declaration published on the occasion of the conference. [Read more](#) or contact: [María Soriano Sanchez](#)

### **UNICE AGAINST FRAMEWORK LEGISLATION ON SERVICES OF GENERAL (ECONOMIC) INTEREST**

In view of the plenary deliberation on the report by Mr Rapkay on the Commission's white paper on services of general interest, UNICE has written to all members of the European Parliament reminding them of UNICE's strong opposition to specific EU legislation in this field. Horizontal legislation would be totally counterproductive. Bearing in mind the great diversity of these services, it would be unworkable. It would also be unnecessary, given the major progress made in the field of SGI over the last ten years, not to mention highly damaging for economic and social development. Protectionist influences would be reactivated and obstacles to competition and private entrepreneurial dynamism reintroduced. The successful system of subsidiarity in place at present should not be burdened by new European rules at a time when there is a general commitment for simplification of EU legislation and a more targeted decision-making. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carlos Almaraz](#)

### **UNICE PRESSES CASE FOR TRADE LIBERALISATION AT WTO PUBLIC FORUM**



On 25 September, UNICE WTO Working Group Vice-Chair Reinhard Quick addressed attendees at the [WTO's Public Forum 2006](#), stressing that a renewed focus on trade liberalisation needs to be at the core of the WTO's activities in the 21st century. He spoke on a forum panel entitled "[Neo-Protectionism: 21st Century Challenge for the WTO](#)" – organised by UNICE in cooperation with the APEC Business Advisory Council. Mr Quick characterised the suspension of the Doha Round as the most obvious example of resurgent protectionist tendencies linked to blinkered notions of what countries need in order to develop. He also addressed the issues of non-tariff barriers such as export taxes, the need for greater differentiation between developing countries according to real economic criteria and the problems posed by negotiations on environmental goods. UNICE also held side meetings with key WTO members and secretariat officials to press for a prompt resumption of the DDA. Contact: [Eoin O'Malley](#)



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### **CLARIFICATIONS NEEDED ON RUNNING AND CONCLUSIONS OF REACH IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS**

At a conference organised by the Commission on the REACH implementation projects (RIPs) on 25 September, UNICE General Adviser Jean-Paul Mingasson raised three particular concerns: a broad consultation of industry is needed when the conclusions of these projects are being prepared; RIPs need to be finalised well before the REACH implementation deadline; RIPs need to remain short and simple to fulfil their objectives of facilitating REACH implementation. UNICE hopes that these concerns will be properly addressed in the coming weeks. [Read more](#) or contact: [Nadine Toscani](#)

### **MERCOSUR: EU BUSINESS SUPPORTS RELAUNCH OF NEGOTIATIONS**

On 25 September, UNICE hosted a meeting of the EU members of the Mercosur-EU Business Forum (MEBF). Participants underlined their concern with the lack of progress in the bi-regional EU-Mercosur free-trade negotiations and supported their rapid relaunch. To contribute to that aim, a MEBF Plenary Conference will be held in Buenos Aires on 6 November with the expected participation of EU and Mercosur business leaders and decision-makers. MEBF will present joint business recommendations on market access, services and investment, and trade facilitation. Contact: [Eoin O'Malley](#)

### **MORE EMPLOYMENT CAN GO WITH STRONG PRODUCTIVITY WHEN SOCIAL PARTNERS SUPPORT REFORMS**

As part of the EU social dialogue work programme 2006-2008, European social partners agreed to undertake a joint analysis of the key challenges facing European labour markets. On 19 September, a first exchange of views took place between UNICE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC. UNICE stressed that social partners should focus on job creation. More employment and strong productivity growth can go hand in hand when social partners are open to reforms. Contact: [Steven D'Haeseleer](#)

### **UNICE-EK TALK TRANSPORT LOGISTICS IN HELSINKI**

UNICE and its Finnish member federation EK jointly hosted a seminar on transport logistics and competitiveness on Friday 22 October in Helsinki. EK Director General [Leif Fagernäs](#) and UNICE Transport working group Chairman [Tom Noonan](#) delivered industry's message to the President of the Transport Council, Minister Susanna Huovinen. Other notable participants at the seminar included Georg Jarzembowski MEP and DG TREN Director Fotis Karamitsos plus numerous representatives of Finnish industry. Contact: [Vincent McGovern](#)

### **JAPANESE AND EUROPEAN BUSINESS SHARE CONCERNS ABOUT IASB**

On 18 September UNICE met a delegation from Nippon Keidanren, the Japanese business confederation, headed by Yoshiki Yagi, Chairman of Hitachi. While sharing the common objective of eventual worldwide harmonisation of international accounting standards, both organisations have common concerns about the future of the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), the accounting standards which EU companies are using and towards which Japan is converging. In particular the governance of the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), responsible for IFRS, is a cause for worry as well as some of its current projects, such as presentation of financial statements, business combinations or the conceptual framework discussion. Contact: [Folker Franz](#)