



Thursday, 19 October 2006

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UNICE DAY, 17 OCTOBER 2006 – A MAJOR SUCCESS!

For the fourth time, close to one thousand business people, policy-makers and journalists from all over Europe have followed UNICE and its member federations' call to Brussels. In Espace Flagey, they discussed the objectives and efficiency of Europe, sharing a stimulating experience around two questions: Why do companies care about Europe? Does Europe care about companies? The event focused on the main achievements of the EU, such as the internal market. It also debated the European strategy for growth and jobs, and the current state of affairs in international trade.

[Read more](#) or contact: [Maria Fernanda Fau](#)



UNICE PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENTS SPEAK UP FOR TRADE AND COMPETITIVENESS

In a letter to the editor of the Financial Times published on Monday 16 October, UNICE President Ernest Antoine Seillière and UNICE's Vice-Presidents underlined, on behalf of the entire UNICE membership, their support for Commissioner Mandelson's new strategy on Global Europe. The letter commends the Commission for its continuing prioritisation of the multilateral process while seeking to ensure that necessary efforts on the bilateral front are fully compatible with the international trading system. It also highlights vital aspects of the strategy that have received less attention including non-tariff barriers, and the relationship with China. [Read more](#) or contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)

EU-INDIA: BUSINESS SUPPORTS STRENGTHENED TRADE RELATIONS

The [7th EU-India Business Summit](#) was held in Helsinki on 12 October gathering key EU and Indian business and political leaders, including the Prime Ministers of India and Finland, Messrs Singh and Vanhanen, EU Commissioner Mandelson and Indian Minister for Trade, Mr Nath. UNICE was represented by Mr Cordero di Montezemolo, UNICE Vice-President and President of Confindustria, and Philippe de Buck, UNICE Secretary General. The main outcome of the Business Summit is strong EU and Indian business support for rapid conclusion of an EU-India trade and investment agreement under certain conditions. This agreement should be developed as a complement to the WTO, which remains the first priority. An EU-India CEO Round Table was held during the Summit, together with specific sessions on services, infrastructure, energy, ICT, and research and manufacturing. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carlos Gonzalez-Finat](#)



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SOCIETAS EUROPAEA: STILL WEAKNESSES

On 13 October, Philippe de Buck met Mrs Noëlle Lenoir, former French Minister for EU affairs, in the context of a new mission she was entrusted with on the assessment of the European Company Statute. During this meeting UNICE had the opportunity to report on the two seminars it organised in 2004 and 2006 on this subject. The weaknesses of the statute were once again highlighted: complexity of the worker involvement regime, lack of fiscal regime, problems of implementation of the directive on worker participation, and the fact that the statute is not suited to SMEs. Mrs Lenoir expects to present a report to the French authorities in the coming months. Contact: [Jérôme Chauvin](#)

EXERCISE OF SHAREHOLDERS' RIGHTS MUST BE FACILITATED, NOT IMPEDED

In the context of the discussion of amendments to the Commission proposal on shareholders' rights at EP level, UNICE has sent a letter to MEPs. UNICE's objective was to highlight its comments to the tabled amendments, stressing the need to strike the right balance between shareholders' rights and companies' interests. In particular, UNICE wants to avoid unnecessary legal burdens on companies. [Read more](#) or contact: [Marta Alegrias](#)

HIGH TIME FOR A NEW MODERNISED FRAMEWORK FOR STATE AID FOR R&D AND INNOVATION

UNICE Secretary General Philippe de Buck has written to Competition Commissioner Neelie Kroes that it is high time for a new modernised framework for [state aid for R&D and innovation](#). The Member States should be encouraged to spend more in this area to increase the level of R&D and innovation and achieve the Barcelona objective of 3% GDP investment in research. However, UNICE strongly believes that recent reform proposals will not resolve current under-investment in R&D and innovation but will in fact create additional hurdles for Member States, discouraging them from stimulating companies to carry out more R&D and innovation. [Read more](#) or contact: [Erik Berggren](#)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON FUTURE PATENT POLICY IN EUROPE

On 12 October 2006, the EP adopted a resolution regarding the future patent policy in Europe urging for improvements to the patent system in Europe including participation to discussions on the European Patent Litigation Agreement (EPLA). UNICE welcomed the Parliament's interest in further improving the patent system in Europe and reiterated the need to address the question of costs and legal certainty. The London Agreement to reduce translation costs and EPLA were two positive ways forward. UNICE committed to maintaining an open dialogue with the EP on the future patent system in Europe. Contact: [Ilias Konteas](#)