



Wednesday, 8 November 2006

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### **JEAN-CLAUDE JUNCKER VISITS UNICE**

On 6 November 2006, UNICE President Ernest-Antoine Seillière had the pleasure of hosting Jean-Claude Juncker, Prime Minister of Luxembourg and President of the Eurogroup at UNICE. During their exchanges, they agreed on: (i) the need to speed up the consolidation of public finances to reach medium-term budgetary objectives; (ii) the opportunity to strengthen the coordination of economic policies between countries sharing the single currency; (iii) the usefulness of a constructive and interactive dialogue between Ministers of Finance and the European Central Bank. Offering strong support to Jean-Claude Juncker, President Seillière emphasised the significant contribution that the Eurogroup is expected to make to a better functioning and growth-enhancing monetary union. [Read more](#) or contact: [Marc Stocker](#)

### **“LONG TERM ENERGY FUTURES AND INVESTMENT IN POWER GENERATION AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY”**

On 30 October the High Level Group for Competitiveness, Energy and the Environment (HLG) adopted a report on "Long term energy futures and investment in power generation and energy efficiency". This report calls on the EU and Member States to build a comprehensive energy strategy driven by the need to ensure competitiveness, fight climate change, and ensure a coherent approach to the security of supply. It calls on the EU to take further action to engage major emitters worldwide in the climate change challenge, through a series of complementary actions including cooperation on technology development and deployment. Finally, the HLG calls for a European Energy Technology Programme supported by ambitious funding. President Seillière, Member of the HLG, clearly underlined the need for a global approach to address climate change, highlighting the problems that would be posed by a unilateral EU strategy which is not matched by comparable efforts by other industrialised countries and acceptance of responsibilities by transition and developing countries. [Read more](#) or contact: [Daniel Cloquet](#)

### **EMPLOYERS PRESENT COMMON ANALYSIS OF EUROPEAN LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES TO ETUC**

On 31 October 2006, a third meeting of the EU social dialogue working group constituted to prepare a joint analysis of the key challenges facing Europe's labour markets was held. UNICE/UEAPME and CEEP presented to ETUC an employers' contribution which highlights the importance of finding new ways of providing security to workers and improving labour market flexibility in order to achieve both employment and productivity growth in Europe. [Read more](#) or contact: [Steven D'Haeseleer](#)

### **UNICE WRITES TO MEGLENA KUNEVA, COMMISSIONER DESIGNATE FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION**

In a letter signed by Philippe de Buck, UNICE has congratulated the new Bulgarian Commissioner designate for consumer protection and forwarded to her UNICE's views on EU consumer policy. The Bulgarian Commissioner designate will appear before the European Parliament on Thursday 9 November. In advance of this hearing, UNICE reiterated the great importance of a sound and balanced consumer policy for companies and the well-functioning of the internal market and recalled its active role in this area. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carlos Almaraz](#)



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### **MACROECONOMIC DIALOGUE AT TECHNICAL LEVEL: PRIORITIES TO CONSOLIDATE THE RECOVERY**

On 25 October 2006, during the technical preparation of the EU Macroeconomic Dialogue - involving social partners, the Commission, Council and the European Central Bank - UNICE emphasised four priorities for the coming year: (i) Member States should take advantage of the recovery to improve decisively their long-term fiscal positions; (ii) ECB needs to take more explicit account of the risks of euro exchange rate appreciation when taking monetary policy decisions; (iii) wage-setting has to become more responsive to the need to restore competitiveness in countries where it has deteriorated significantly over recent years; (iv) further labour, product and capital market reforms will be needed to avoid any trade-off between increasing employment rates and weak productivity growth. [Read more](#) or contact: [Marc Stocker](#)

### **DUBLIN FOUNDATION FORUM DISCUSSES HOW TO RECONCILE COMPETITIVENESS AND SOCIAL POLICY**

A third forum on EU social policy was organised by the European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions in Dublin on 2 and 3 November 2006. Speaking during a roundtable discussion on why Europe is not achieving the Lisbon goals, UNICE stressed that growth is picking up and Europe is creating employment but not enough high productivity jobs. The experience of some European countries shows that it is possible to develop social policies which supported competitiveness and to achieve both employment and productivity growth. The ingredients behind their success are: flexible labour law, cost effective active labour market policies and employment-friendly social protection systems. Contact: [Thérèse de Liedekerke](#)

### **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND ICT KEY TO COMPETITIVENESS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

In view of the 2006 review of the EU Electronic Communications Legislation, UNICE has published a position paper on this topic outlining the importance of telecommunications, as part of the ICT sector. This sector makes a major contribution to overall productivity and economic growth and is therefore a key input to the competitiveness of European business and the wider economy. The '2006 review' of the EU electronic communications framework needs to build on this potential by reinforcing and completing the Internal Market with more effective enforcement and consistency across Member States, and transition from retail regulation to a tighter focus on key wholesale bottlenecks. UNICE believes that a competitive market will drive innovation, investment and consumer benefit. [Read more](#) or contact: [Miriam Munnich](#)