



Wednesday, 13 December 2006

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PRESIDENT SEILLIÈRE RECEIVES HIGH-LEVEL DECORATION IN THE HAGUE

UNICE President Ernest-Antoine Seillière has been made Commander of the Orange-Nassau Order by Her Majesty Queen Beatrix. He received the decoration from Minister for Economic Affairs, Joop Wijn, on 12 December at a ceremony organised in the offices of UNICE's Dutch member federation, VNO-NCW. UNICE Secretary General Philippe de Buck attended the ceremony, as well as VNO-NCW President Bernard Wientjes. [Read more](#) or contact: [Philippe de Buck](#)

PRESIDENT SEILLIÈRE GUEST SPEAKER AT 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF ELEC

ELEC, the European League for Economic Cooperation, celebrated its 60th anniversary on 8 December with a conference in the European Parliament in which UNICE President Mr Ernest-Antoine Seillière was a guest speaker. President Seillière was asked to present to the distinguished audience the priorities of UNICE as well as European business expectations in view of the 50th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome. He made his presentation around three issues of central importance to UNICE: fully exploiting the *acquis communautaire*, meeting the challenges of globalisation and contributing to the future of Europe. [Read more](#) or contact: [María Soriano](#)

GERMAN PRESIDENCY PRIORITIES MATCH UNICE'S CONCERNS

Peter Witt, Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany, discussed German Presidency priorities on 7 December with UNICE's Permanent Delegates in Brussels. He expected that a resolution of the blocked Constitutional Treaty would be presented to the June Summit, and passed on to the Portuguese to finalise. Major challenges would also be faced on enlargement to Turkey, and energy relations with Russia. There were links between the energy and climate change dossiers, but the schedule for analysis and debate prior to the Spring Summit was extremely tight. The Presidency would oversee national discussion of the emission trading scheme and work on national action plans to counter greenhouse gases. Peter Witt hoped for significant movement in better regulation, with standard impact assessments, and an independent monitoring body. It was appreciated that German priorities coincided so clearly with UNICE's own concerns for business in 2007. Contact: [Peter Kettlewell](#)

UNICE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR MEDITERRANEAN AT THE EPP-ED STUDY DAY

Mr Ulysses Kyriacopoulos, UNICE Special Representative for Mediterranean Affairs, participated on 7 December in a Study Day on the future of Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation organised by the Group of the European People's Party and European Democrats in the European Parliament. He was invited to speak in panel 4 on "The economic challenges and perspectives of Euro-Mediterranean relations" chaired by MEP Mrs Rodi Kratsa. Mr Kyriacopoulos shared the panel with Mrs Monia Skhiri, Secretary General of UMCE who gave a presentation of the organisation and its priorities, and with Mr Simon Busutil, MEP and Vice-Chairman of the EP Delegation for relations with the Maghreb countries and the Arab Maghreb Union who made the concluding statement. [Read more](#) or contact: [María Soriano](#)



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THE COMMISSION'S ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT POINTS THE WAY TO NATIONAL REFORM

UNICE has put reforms for growth and jobs in Europe as a top priority. On 12 December, in its Annual Progress Report, the European Commission for the first time evaluated progress in implementing these reforms, which must be considered an important assessment. Member States must take the country-specific recommendations very seriously and take action in view of the Spring European Council 2007. The mistakes of the past when economic recovery resulted in reform complacency must not be repeated. [Read more](#) or contact: [Folker Franz](#)

UNICE HOLDS SEMINAR ON CLIMATE CHANGE WITH DG ENVIRONMENT

On 7 December, UNICE organised a seminar with Peter Carl, Director General of DG Environment, to discuss the review of the EU Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) and the international framework for combating climate change post-2012. In line with the UNICE statement for the Nairobi conference, Philippe de Buck, Secretary General of UNICE, highlighted that business and industry in Europe are committed to combating climate change and underlined the importance of creating a truly global framework in order to be environmentally effective and cost-efficient. Furthermore, UNICE stressed the importance of harmonising the provisions of the existing EU ETS, to create a level playing field within Europe, and to make a thorough analysis before including additional sectors (aviation) in the scheme, as outlined in the UNICE statement on this issue. Contact: [Daniel Cloquet](#) or [Miriam Munnich](#)

UNICE STRATEGY ON AN EU APPROACH TO FREE-TRADE AGREEMENTS

On 12 December, Eoin O'Malley, UNICE Adviser for International Relations, presented the new UNICE strategy on bilateral trade agreements during a Commission Civil Society Dialogue session. The strategy outlines the best approach to achieve growth-generating trade liberalisation in future trade agreements by calling for full product coverage for industrial goods, very broad coverage in services where UNICE favours a negative list approach, strong disciplines on investment and the inclusion of issues such as government procurement, regulatory cooperation and new intellectual property disciplines. To highlight its strong support for the immediate resumption of WTO Doha negotiations, Adrian van den Hoven, UNICE's Director of International Relations Department, participated in another civil society meeting on 12 December to ask what European civil society could do to support the restart of negotiations. Earlier in the week, UNICE met the Deputy-Director General of DG Trade, Dr Peter Balas, to exchange views on the WTO negotiations and to express European business support for a rapid resumption of negotiations. Dr Balas informed UNICE of the EU's commitment to the Doha Round despite the current difficulties in Geneva. [Read more](#) or contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)



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TRADE DEFENCE POLICY: AGREEMENT ON CHALLENGES, BUT MORE IN DEPTH DISCUSSIONS NEEDED

On 5 December, Monique Jones, UNICE Chairman of Trade Defence Policy, and Adrian van den Hoven, UNICE's Director for International Relations, participated in a seminar organised by the British MEP Syed Kamall and the British Retail Council. The event brought together representatives of industry, retailers, and "provider/off-shored" industry with MEPs from the UK and Denmark as well as Commission officials. The discussions outlined some of the challenges to be addressed in the debate on the Commission Green Paper on issues such as Market Economy Treatment investigations, the complexities faced by companies with off-shored production or "contracted production" (companies that design and control the product but out-source the production to a foreign producer) under trade defence instruments or the challenges faced by EU producers in competition with transition countries (export restrictions, government interference, export subsidies, etc.). More in-depth discussions are needed to find solutions that do not undermine fundamental principles of EU and WTO law or the effectiveness of TDI policy. Contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)

UNICE WAS AT THE PAN-EUROPEAN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY SUMMIT

Jérôme Chauvin, Director of UNICE's Legal Affairs Department, participated on behalf of UNICE in the pan-European IP Summit on 8 December 2006 in Brussels. In his address, he stressed the key UNICE messages regarding the future patent strategy in Europe, currently contemplated by the Commission and the Member States, namely the need to improve the functioning of the patent system in terms of costs and legal certainty. UNICE fully supported the London Agreement and the European Patent Litigation Agreement (EPLA), two instruments designed to address those issues. Contact: [Ilias Konteas](#)

UNICE BACKS PRIORITIES FOR EUROPEAN COOPERATION ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

On 5 December 2006, the Finnish presidency organised a ministerial conference on vocational education and training in Helsinki. The purpose was to evaluate the results of the cooperation process on vocational education and training launched at EU level in 2002. The priorities on which to focus work during the next two years were also endorsed by UNICE, in its social partner capacity. The next ministerial meeting to take stock of the progress made in creating European tools to facilitate mobility will be held in France in 2008. [Read more](#) or contact: [Matthew Higham](#)

SEV AND CONFINDUSTRIA IN 3RD RESTRUCTURING FORUM

The 3rd Restructuring Forum took place on 4 and 5 December and focused on how dynamic regions face restructuring. Mr Tortopidis, from the Federation of Greek industries SEV, stressed that restructuring is smoother in those regions where entrepreneurship is more developed. Mr Moltrasio, Vice-President of Confindustria, pointed out the importance of the social dialogue and that it is at the local level where one needs to create employment opportunities to relocate people. Commissioners Hübner, Spidla and Verheugen jointly highlighted that restructuring is a dynamic process that will not stop so it is crucial to turn it into an opportunity, counting on assistance from EU funds. [Read more](#) or contact: [Eva Maria Revilla](#)