



Wednesday, 20 December 2006

No. 2006-41

PRESIDENT OF LITHUANIA, MR VALDAS ADAMKUS, VISITS UNICE

On 14 December, the day of the European Council meeting, the President of the Republic of Lithuania, Mr Valdas Adamkus, honoured UNICE and the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists (LPK) with a visit and a meeting with Mr Philippe de Buck, UNICE Secretary General. Accompanied by H.E. Mrs Nijole Žambaitė, Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to the Kingdom of Belgium and Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Mr Romas Švedas, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Lithuania to the EU, Mr Gintaras Morkis, Deputy Secretary General of LPK, and Mr Andrius Romanovskis, Permanent Delegate of LPK, Mr Valdas Adamkus discussed current European dossiers such as the energy issue. Contact: [Philippe de Buck](#)

ENERGY AND BETTER REGULATION AT THE CORE OF UASG MEETING

On 14 December, Matthias Ruete, Director General of DG Energy and Transport, briefed the well-attended UASG meeting on the work of the High-Level Group on Competitiveness, Energy and the Environment. Clearly, an efficient energy strategy - of utmost interest to the leading companies in the UNICE Advisory and Support Group - is at the top of the EU agenda. Better Regulation is another business priority. Gert-Jan Koopman, Director for Industrial Policy and Economic Reforms in DG Enterprise, discussed the latest Commission initiatives with the group, which provided him with useful feedback on implementation. Looking ahead to the first half of 2007, UASG members were informed about the priorities of the German EU Presidency and the expectations of the business community. Contact: [Wytze Russchen](#)

UNICE MEETS THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF DG TRADE

On 18 December, Philippe de Buck met David O'Sullivan to express UNICE's concerns over the lack of progress in the WTO DDA negotiations. The Director General reaffirmed the EU commitment to resume the DDA negotiations as rapidly as possible but warned that the US also needs to re-engage in the negotiations. President Barroso will raise DDA negotiations with President Bush during an 8 January 2007 visit to Washington. Philippe de Buck informed Mr O'Sullivan that UNICE would make the case for the Doha Round at the next Confederation of Indian Industries' Summit in Bangalore on 17-19 January 2007 where he will participate as a guest speaker. Other issues raised at the meeting included future bilateral trade negotiations, Commissioner Mandelson's views on border tax adjustments (climate change) and sustainable development policy. UNICE also presented its strategy on ambition for bilateral trade negotiations. Contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)

UNICE MEETS THE PRESIDENT OF THE PARTY OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS

On 19 December 2006, Philippe de Buck, Secretary General of UNICE, met Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, President of the Party of European Socialists (PES), to discuss the ten principles for a new social Europe adopted by the PES during their 7th congress in Porto. Philippe de Buck underlined the need to improve growth in order to create more jobs. It was agreed that further discussions could be held to prepare the flexicurity debate in 2007. Contact: [Christian Feustel](#)



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EUROPEAN SOCIAL PARTNERS FINALISE DRAFT AGREEMENT ON HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE AT WORK

On 15 December 2006, negotiations on a non-legally binding agreement on harassment and violence at work were concluded. The text prepared by the UNICE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC negotiating teams will be submitted for approval to the decision-making bodies of the European social partners. It will be published in March 2007 when this process is completed. Contact: [Thérèse de Liedekerke](#)

RENEWABLE ENERGIES FURTHER PROMOTED

On 14 December, a UNICE team led by Mr Hansen, Chairman of the UNICE Task Force on Renewable Energies, met the cabinets of Commissioners Dimas and Piebalgs to discuss the EU policy for renewable energies. European industry is in favour of promoting renewable energies, on a cost-efficient basis, as one option for overcoming the challenges of climate change and security of energy supply. To promote renewable energies, UNICE recommends a move towards further harmonisation of existing national support schemes, with the long-term goal of a unified European support scheme for these energies. [Read more](#) or contact: [Miriam Munnich](#)

DEVELOPMENT OF EU POST-2012 CLIMATE STRATEGY

In the context of preparation of the energy/climate package by the Commission, Philippe de Buck has written to President Barroso with a view to clarifying the key elements to be put in place to underpin companies' efforts in the area of climate protection. There is a crucial need to improve integration of the competitiveness, energy and environment aspects linked to the climate change challenge. Also, the Commission should intensify its political efforts in order to bring about a balanced international agreement. The adoption of ambitious unilateral EU objectives for reducing emissions could seriously undermine the breadth of commitment that European companies could make to intensify their contribution to combating climate change. [Read more](#) or contact: [Daniel Cloquet](#)

EUROPEAN BUSINESS WELCOMES SEC PROPOSALS

On 13 December, UNICE welcomed the US Securities and Exchange Commission proposals on Section 404 Sarbanes-Oxley Act and on deregistration. UNICE has on several occasions pointed out that EU businesses face burdensome and disproportionate rules when listed on US stock exchanges. Now, these proposals should aim at reducing existing burdens in terms of compliance procedures and costs. They provide, respectively, new guidance to companies on application of internal controls and new rules allowing companies which have an average daily trading volume no greater than 5% to deregister from US stock exchanges. [Read more](#) or contact: [Marta Alegrias](#)



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UNICE SUPPORTS STRATEGIC REVIEW OF BETTER REGULATION

UNICE Secretary General Philippe de Buck has written to Commission Vice-President Günter Verheugen to submit detailed comments and suggestions on the plans and ideas outlined in the 14 November Commission Communication on better regulation. UNICE is happy about the continuing efforts of the Commission to make further progress on this important issue but highlights the need for quick concrete results. [Read more](#) or contact: [Erik Berggren](#)

MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION URGED TO DELIVER ON EU'S PATENT STRATEGY

In a letter addressed to EU Member States prior to the European Council on 14-15 December 2006, UNICE expressed serious concerns about the direction of discussions on the future patent strategy for Europe. Business is not keen to see another standstill in the patent debate. Innovative companies, contributing to Europe's competitiveness, can no longer accept being held hostage by various national interests. UNICE asked Member States and the Commission to deliver the patent strategy the EU needs in line with business requests. [Read more](#) or contact: [Ilias Konteas](#)



UNICE wishes you all the best for **2007...**
Happy New Year !

On 23 January 2007 we will surprise you with a **big change**

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HEADLINES TAKES A BREAK

Your next Headlines will be published on 17 January 2006. With our best Season's Greetings!