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## PRESS RELEASE

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### TRIPARTITE SOCIAL SUMMIT: SOCIAL PARTNERS TAKE ACTIONS TO PROMOTE GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT

**ETUC, UNICE/UEAPME and CEEP will present four joint actions to promote growth and employment to the Presidents of the European Council, Mr Juncker, and of the Commission, Mr Barroso during the tripartite social summit on 22 March preceding the EU Spring Summit.**

These initiatives were announced in their joint declaration on the mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy published on 15 March 2005 and are part of the autonomous workprogramme of the EU social dialogue 2003-2005. They consist in:

- a [framework of actions on gender equality / annexe](#),
- the [third joint report on the implementation of their framework of actions on life long learning](#),
- the [second annual joint report on employment](#),
- a [joint contribution to the European Youth Initiative](#).

#### The framework of actions on gender equality

The European social partners attach the greatest importance to this new framework of actions.

The objective of the European Union is to reach an employment rate of 70 % and to increase the number of women in employment from 51% to more than 60% by 2010. Living up to this challenge in a context of demographic ageing requires a new perspective on the role of women and men. Success in tackling the causes of remaining inequalities calls for integrated strategies to promote gender equality, in particular through actions to desegregate labour markets.

CEEP, UNICE/UEAPME and ETUC want national social partners to take action on four priorities during the next five years:

- addressing gender roles,
- promoting women in decision-making,
- supporting work-life balance, and
- tackling the gender pay gap.

Through this framework of actions, national social partners undertake to promote gender equality. UNICE/UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC will draw up an annual report on the actions to live up to this commitment.

*“Equality between women and men has been one of the fundamental principles of the European Union since the very beginning. Finding concrete ways of responding to increasingly diverse needs of individual women and men is the way to combat gender stereotypes while efficiently meeting the requirements of the employer. This is the win-win situation we want to pursue with the framework of actions”, emphasised Mr J. Cravinho, President of CEEP*

#### The second joint report on employment

ETUC, UNICE/UEAPME and CEEP agreed to report on social partner actions in Member States which are relevant for implementation of the European employment guidelines. This second report focuses on the implementation of the recommendation of the report of the Employment task force chaired by Mr Wim Kok. It comprises a European chapter, describing main trends and individual country reports.

The majority of initiatives taken by social partners across Europe concern:

- flexibility and security on the labour market.
- activation policies, in particular to promote active ageing and women labour market participation.

*“Social partners are involved in policies to create more and better jobs, in balancing flexibility with security, including through the joint management of change, and in boosting the knowledge-base of the European economy and its workers. This joint employment report is a tool to inspire good practices across Europe” said Candido Mendes, President of ETUC.*

#### The third annual report on life long learning

In March 2002, the European social partners adopted a framework of actions for the lifelong development of competences and qualifications. They identified four areas for priority actions:

- to identify and anticipate competences and qualifications needs,
- to recognise and validate competences and qualifications,
- to inform, support and provide guidance,
- to mobilise resources.

This third annual report shows that social partners across the EU play a key role in the definition of more coherent lifelong learning policies in their respective countries. Common features are :

- the involvement of social partners in actions to improve the conditions of adult learning, in particular in the new Member States,
- the promotion of different co-financing tools,
- the promotion of prior learning assessment, development of certificates and validation tools,
- the involvement of social partners to alleviate obstacles to competence development for individuals and companies.

*“Developing people’s competences is essential to enhance innovation. The report testifies to an intensification of dialogue and partnership to find practical solutions to the life long learning challenges across Europe”, said Dr J. Strube, President of UNICE.*

## The joint contribution to the EU Youth initiative

The European social partners call on the European Council to take an intergenerational approach and announce that they decided to produce a joint declaration and/or awareness raising campaigns with a view to promoting young people's interest in science and technology and agreed to explore possible joint actions in the field of ageing workforce.

*“Human capital is a vital asset for small and medium sized enterprises. Due to the shrinkage of the workforce, they will be particularly vulnerable to recruitment problems. Our future depends on Europe's capacity to develop active ageing strategies and at the same time on enhancing the participation of young people on the labour market”, concluded Mr Reckinger, President of UEAPME.*

The full texts of the four joint social partners initiatives are available on the websites of UNICE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC.

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### **For more information please contact:**

Maria Fernanda Fau, UNICE  
Richard More O'Ferrall, UEAPME  
Valeria Ronzitti, CEEP  
Patricia Grillo, ETUC

Tel.:+32(0)2 237 65 62  
Tel.:+32(0)2 230 75 99  
Tel.:+32(0)2 229 21 42  
Tel.: +32(0)2 224 04 31

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