

EUROCHAMBRES calls on ministers to transform “eUnion” from vision into reality

Speaking at today’s Ministerial Meeting on eGovernment – one of the key events of the Swedish Presidency – EUROCHAMBRES’ Secretary General Arnaldo Abruzzini called on the European Commission and Member States to turn the concept of “eUnion” from a vision into a reality. *“It is not a question of technology, he said, but of political will.”*

Mr Abruzzini recalled that the development of efficient eGovernment services is of tremendous importance for both citizens and businesses: *“The more administrative formalities are carried out on-line, the more bureaucracy will be reduced and transparency improved. Such progress by public administrations will also stimulate the uptake of electronic applications and procedures in the private sector and promote technological innovations in this field.”*

Mr Abruzzini emphasised in particular the potential of electronic public procurement. *“As recent research shows, electronic procedures will lead to more bidders and thus increased competition, which could create savings in the order of 150 billion EUR EU-wide.”*

Mr Abruzzini, however, denounced the poor involvement of businesses in the design and implementation of these crucial dossiers. He said: *“Until now, the European Commission’s pilot programmes PEPPOL (on eProcurement) and SPOCS (on the implementation of Services Directive) have been developed without consistently taking into account the needs of end users. It would be a grave mistake not to consult businesses more thoroughly on these issues, since they are meant to be the ultimate beneficiaries of these initiatives.”*

The role of Chambers

Chambers are already doing their part to make the eUnion a reality through ChamberSign, the association which promotes the use of e-Signature – the tool which creates a link between an electronic document and a person’s identity. So far, over 3.5 million digital certificates have been issued by Chambers in 14 countries for signing VAT declarations and electronic invoices online, securing email exchanges and electronic procurement.

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