



Position Paper

September 2016

Declaration for a Solid Internal Market without National Barriers

In the light of several crises that the EU currently faces, a strengthened and solid Internal Market is needed more than ever. Citizens, whether as consumers, entrepreneurs or employees, have to sense the attractiveness of the Internal Market and benefit from its four freedoms.

Businesses, as the engine of the economic growth and of job creation, must be allowed to capitalise on the full potential of the Internal Market. Free and fair competition, one of the main principles of the Internal Market and crucial to a healthy economy, must be ensured. Any malfunction or distrust in the Internal Market will further undermine the European Union.

Following the British referendum, further division among the EU members must be avoided. The EU is based on solidarity and unity. **Protectionist national measures and differing treatment of EU members could raise levels of antipathy to the EU project and create a domino effect.**

EUROCHAMBRES rejects national barriers to the Internal Market and, in this respect, we welcome the decision of the European Commission to take legal action against countries that adopt protectionist measures in the name of local privileged social protection. We share fully the assessment of the Commission that the application of the minimum wage to certain international transport operations having only a marginal link to the territory of the host Member States cannot be justified and creates disproportionate administrative barriers.

We hope for a sensible and prompt decision of the European Commission on infringements launched in this area that would have a positive impact on the free movement of goods and services.

In a Joint Statement published in June 2015, 14 national Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Europe¹ expressed their disappointment with the application of the German law on minimum wages on the services of EU and non EU Member States provided in Germany.

¹ Czech Chamber of Commerce, Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Polish Chamber of Commerce, Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Belgian Chambers, Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Foreign Trade Chamber of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatian Chamber of Economy, Chambers Ireland, Association of Lithuania Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Crafts, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia, Hellenic Chambers of Commerce and the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The statement stressed the negative impact of this application on international commercial transport. It also warned that the German law might be just the beginning and that the application of similar measures by other Member States would paralyse the functioning of the Internal Market. Indeed, France has followed with 'Loi Macron', which brings even more administrative burden and raises the costs for transport companies, especially SMEs from other Member States doing business in France. This inevitably creates additional obstacles to the free movement of services, goods and workers that are ostensibly guaranteed by the Treaties.

While respecting the requirements to safeguard the social protection of workers, EUROCHAMBRES calls on the European Commission and Member States to strengthen and deepen the Internal Market as the cornerstone of European integration based on free movement of goods, services, people and capital and to remove all obstacles hindering its correct functioning.²

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EUROCHAMBRES – The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents over 20 million enterprises in Europe – 98% of which are SMEs – through members in 43 countries and a European network of 1700 regional and local Chambers.

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² The French Chamber organisation, CCI France and the German Chamber organisation, DIHK, do not support this position paper.