

PRESS RELEASE

Services Directive, one year later **EUROCHAMBRES survey highlights disparity in implementation**

One year after the adoption of the 'Services Directive', aimed at improving the provision and establishment of services across the EU, a EUROCHAMBRES survey portrays a mixed picture across Member States with regard to implementation of the Directive and involvement of relevant stakeholders.

The results of the survey – carried out among 26 national Chambers of Commerce¹ – show that the implementation process has progressed or at least started in the vast majority of EU Member States during the course of 2007. Chambers also indicated that they are more involved in the process than they were six months ago².

But despite this overall improvement, a number of fundamental problems remain and some countries' performance must be greatly improved if the implementation is to be positively concluded by the end of 2009.

Some countries behind schedule

The good news is that the number of Member States (MS) having put in place mechanisms to project-manage the implementation of the Directive has doubled since June 2007 (from 42% to 85%). The bad news is that the process of implementation has only just started in a number of MS, with some plans being adopted as late as in November 2007, nearly one year into the implementation period.

'Points of Single Contact' (PSCs) the trickiest issue

The establishment of PSCs appears as the main problem for the implementation of the Directive, as it is being carried out in a non-homogeneous way. 62% of MS did not yet indicate a preferred approach in this respect (nature and tasks of the PSC). There is also the risk that PSCs will not become a genuine point of compliance for companies, thus resulting in being less beneficial for European businesses. Some Chambers are exploring with national authorities the possibility to act fully or partially as PSC.

Differing screening performances

Member States' performances in screening existing legislation differ significantly, with some having ended the process, whereas others have just started. Nonetheless, 88% of

¹ From the 27 EU Member States except Romania.

² A first assessment of the implementation of the Services Directive and the level of stakeholders' involvement was carried out by EUROCHAMBRES in June 2007.

EUROCHAMBRES – The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents over 19 million enterprises in Europe through 46 members and a European network of 2000 regional and local Chambers.

countries have started to implement screening activities – a big improvement compared to June 2007, when Chambers registered that plans for the legislative screening had been tabled in only six countries.

Interoperability at risk

Member States seem to have problems in planning and setting up electronic systems which should ensure the interoperability of the whole structure by the end of 2009. This seems often to be due to the public administrations' lack of preparation and expertise, but also to delays and technical problems.

Commenting on these findings, Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES, said: *“While we are pleased to see that the implementation of the Directive is taking place, we regret the slow and varying pace of the process. For the Directive to be fully beneficial to European business, Member States should complete the screening process as soon as possible, and opt for fully operational PSC models, that ensure complete electronic interoperability.”*

EUROCHAMBRES also asks the European Commission to issue yearly progress reports on the implementation of the Directive, to be presented at each Spring Summit. From their side, Chambers will continue monitoring the issue closely and advocating for an extensive inclusion in the process.

The full survey on the implementation of the Services Directive can be downloaded from www.eurochambres.eu/PDF/pdf_intmkt/080121-SurveyServicesDirective.pdf

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