

Services Directive properly implemented in only one third of member states, EUROCHAMBRES survey shows

A EUROCHAMBRES survey conducted among Chambers of Commerce throughout the EU shows that only 9 out of the 27 member states complied fully with the Services Directive by the 28 December 2009 deadline. Implementation in the remaining 18 countries is average or unsatisfactory because of problems or delays with legal and/or operational aspects.

Shortcomings concern on the one hand the legislative screening, still not completed in some countries, and the delayed adoption of horizontal implementing laws. On the other hand, about a quarter of EU member states have not yet put in place the key operational element, the Points of Single Contact (PSC).

Legislative aspects: screenings not completed or legal changes not yet adopted

Chambers report marked differences between member states' legislative implementation of the directive. In about half of member states, the process has been finalised. Conversely, some countries have not yet completed the screening of their national or regional legislation, while in others the screening has been completed, but implementing laws have not yet been adopted for legal or political reasons.

Operational aspects: unsatisfactory set-up of Points of Single Contact (PSCs)

Virtually all member states have decided how and where to establish the PSCs, with a great majority opting for a model which comprises of both a point of information and a point of completion of formalities. However, in about a quarter of member states, the basic preparations for the PSC set-up has not yet been completed. Elsewhere, national PSCs which are already accessible do not yet offer the full range of services and information that they are required to provide. Significantly, some Chambers highlight the difficulties encountered by their government in replacing paper-based forms and procedures with electronic ones. It is also noteworthy that nearly half of the national PSCs are currently available only in the national language(s).

“An unfinished job is unacceptable”

Commenting on these findings, EUROCHAMBRES' Secretary General Arnaldo Abruzzini said: *“Some member states did not use the three-year implementation period properly. The delays in several countries make the EU-wide picture extremely patchy and create a suboptimal situation for a service provider seeking to enter another EU national market.”*

“Disappointingly, a number of member states clearly did not consider this directive's implementation as a political and economic priority. We now expect the European Commission to take the appropriate steps vis-à-vis those countries which are lagging behind. Moreover, we expect the ‘mutual evaluation’ phase in 2010 to represent a key peer pressure exercise among member states. The Services Directive is crucial for businesses, an ‘unfinished job’ is not an acceptable outcome,” he said.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS		
Good implementation (legal and operational implementation completed fully and on time)	Moderate implementation (either legal or operational implementation late/unfinished/insufficient)	Poor implementation (both legal and operational implementation late/unfinished)
Czech Republic	Austria	Bulgaria
Denmark	Belgium	Greece
Estonia	Cyprus	Ireland
Finland	France	Italy
Germany	Luxembourg	Latvia
Hungary	Malta	Poland
The Netherlands	Portugal	Slovakia
Sweden	Romania	Slovenia
United Kingdom	Spain	
<i>No data available for Lithuania</i>		

The full results of EUROCHAMBRES' survey "Mapping the Implementation of the Services Directive in EU Member States" can be downloaded from
www.eurochambres.eu/content/default.asp?PageID=1&DocID=2205

Further information: Mr Giovanni Campi, Tel. +32 2 282 08 83, campi@eurochambres.eu
 Press contact: Ms Guendalina Cominotti, Tel. +32 2 282 08 66, cominotti@eurochambres.eu
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