

PRESS RELEASE

Services Directive: EUROCHAMBRES urges EU Parliament not to take backwards step

Commenting on the latest compromise between the two main political groups in the European Parliament (EP), EUROCHAMBRES expresses its disappointment at the potential watering down of key free market provisions of the Services Directive. The new approach would appear to be open to different interpretations and fails to provide companies with the simplified procedures and legal certainty they need to provide services across borders.

Ahead of next week's vote in Strasbourg, Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES, calls upon the Parliament to resist protectionist pressure and to demonstrate a genuine commitment to the Lisbon goals.

"The EP should vote through the Directive based on a broad scope of application, and on a return to the legislation of the country of establishment as the reference point for cross border services trade", Mr Abruzzini said.

Chambers had hoped that the EP would follow the lead of its Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee and adopt a robust and positive approach on the Directive. Instead, the latest compromise replaces the original 'country of establishment' clause with a vague commitment to 'ensure free access to and free exercise of a service activity within its territory' subject to a whole range of loosely termed exceptions.

Mr Abruzzini added: *"In its vote in November, the Committee managed to achieve a fair compromise between creating a general internal market in services in Europe with more legal certainty, fewer barriers for companies wishing to trade services across borders, and adequate protection for workers, consumers and the environment. Businesses are disappointed that the Parliament looks likely to take such a backwards step."*

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