

5th EUROCHAMBRES survey on the Services Directive: **Increased concerns over implementation as deadline looms**

About 40% of European national Chambers of Commerce believe that their country will not have fully implemented the Services Directive by the 28 December 2009 deadline. This marks the first drop in Chambers' confidence on the directive's implementation throughout EUROCHAMBRES' monitoring of the process.

Despite some overall improvements over the past six months, the latest EUROCHAMBRES study on the implementation of the Services Directive shows that some countries face persisting difficulties in complying with specific provisions, such as e-procedures related to the Points of Single Contact, or the simplification of administrative structures and procedures.

Points of Single Contact (PSCs): operational implementation by 28 December unlikely

Today, virtually all Member States have decided how and where to set up the PSCs, with a majority opting for a model which comprises of both a point of information and a point of completion of formalities.

However, operational aspects of the PSCs remain a source of concern for Chambers. Problems persist with regard to the electronic functioning of the system and the interoperability of e-tools such as signatures, authentications, etc. Some countries, such as Germany and Italy, seem to be encountering more difficulties in this respect, also because of their multilevel governance structures, which create further organisational and structural problems. Chambers from other countries, such as Austria and Spain, stressed the need for their authorities to clarify the PSCs' operational aspects and develop more detailed schemes. Chambers also note that the great majority of Member States will set up the PSC structure and operations only in their national language, thus reducing the value of the system.

Legislative screening: not yet completed in many countries

Chambers register marked differences between Member States' screening performances. Whereas some countries have completed or are close to completing their screening process, in others – such as Belgium and Italy – the process is behind schedule and is expected to be finalised only shortly ahead of the implementation deadline.

Commenting on these findings, EUROCHAMBRES' Secretary General Arnaldo Abruzzini said: *"It is clear that, by 28 December, some Member States will have fully implemented the directive, whereas others will meet the deadline legally, but not operationally, meaning there will be no tangible improvement for services providers seeking to enter these national markets."*

"The implementation of this directive must be a political and economic priority in the coming months. Failure to implement it fully by the end of the year would be a kick in the teeth for thousands of businesses at just the time when many need all the help they can get."

The fifth EUROCHAMBRES study on the Services Directive can be downloaded from www.eurochambres.eu/content/default.asp?PageID=1&DocID=1917

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
All our press releases can be downloaded from www.eurochambres.eu/content/default.asp?PageID=153

Connecting **business to Europe**

EUROCHAMBRES – The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents over 19 million enterprises in Europe – 96% of which are SMEs – through members in 45 countries and a European network of 2000 regional and local Chambers.