

## Competitiveness Council conclusions: Member States must take responsibility for the Internal Market now

While encouraged by the emphasis on the internal market at this week's Competitiveness Council, EUROCHAMBRES still believes that Member States are burying their heads in the sand when it comes to improvements.

*"It is encouraging that competitiveness ministers have finally recognised something that we have been arguing since the beginning of the crisis: that a better functioning internal market is the most effective means to enhance growth and jobs in the medium term. However, the principles are meaningless without legislative implementation and enforcement",* stated Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES.

The implementation of the Services Directive is a case in point: the 3-year implementation period ends in December and the quality of transposition and implementation of some key aspects of the directive falls worryingly short of business expectations in a number of Member States. EUROCHAMBRES highlighted this in its latest biannual survey on the implementation of the directive in July, a message echoed by the Commission on the eve of the Council.

*"The last three months of the implementation period of the Services Directive are an opportunity for Member States to reassure us of their commitment to help businesses reap the benefits of a true internal market for services and to cooperating on the re-launch the European economy. We praise the Swedish Presidency for organising a working lunch during the Competitiveness Council on the directive's implementation: it is time for Member States to face their collective, as well as individual, responsibilities on this key dossier",* added Abruzzini.

The Council conclusions are a small step in the right direction. We now expect Member States to show that the conclusions they all signed up to are not just empty words.

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