



PRESS RELEASE

5 November 2008

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE POSITION ENDANGERS FRAGILE COMPROMISE ON WORKING TIME

BUSINESSEUROPE is concerned that the wide ranging changes proposed by the European Parliament's Employment Committee will put in danger the fragile compromise agreed between member states.

The changes proposed by the Employment Committee would significantly hamper the flexibility that is necessary for workers and companies to operate in today's global economy and therefore negatively affect Europe's competitiveness at a time where Europe can simply not afford to put further breaks on growth and employment.

The main concerns are the following:

1. BUSINESSEUROPE is alarmed that despite a number of safeguards introduced by the Council, the Employment Committee voted to delete the opt-out provision. The opt-out is a vital tool for companies and many individuals value the opportunity it offers to earn more money by working additional hours.
2. European employers are also critical of the Employment Committee's decision to count inactive on-call time as working time. The Council provided a sensible solution to problems arising from various cases in the Court of Justice. This decision will have negative budgetary implications across member states in the private but also public sector.

Ernest-Antoine Seillière, President of BUSINESSEUROPE said: *"The vote of the Employment Committee of the European Parliament has put in danger the pragmatic solution agreed between member states and the possibility of finally adopting an amended directive. We believe that MEPs should think twice and support the Council's common position at the plenary vote."*

NOTE TO THE EDITOR

BUSINESSEUROPE – the Confederation of European Business represents more than 20 million small, medium and large companies. Active in European affairs since 1958, BUSINESSEUROPE Members are 40 central industrial and employers' federations from 34 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe.

For further information, please contact: Peter Vertessy +32(0)2 237.65.03
www.businesseurope.eu