



24 November 2008

READY, STEADY, SERVICE!
THE SERVICES DIRECTIVE: STATE OF PLAY WITH IMPLEMENTATION

**CONCLUDING REMARKS BY PHILIPPE DE BUCK – DIRECTOR GENERAL OF
BUSINESSEUROPE**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The interesting and constructive discussion we had today on the transposition of the Services Directive has shown us three main things:

Firstly, that the responsibility of national governments in incorporating EU law into their national legal orders is of paramount importance for the effective implementation of the rights and obligations that those laws create for citizens and companies in the EU.

Secondly, that the transposition of the Services Directive represents a unique opportunity for Member States to make Europe happen for citizens. A good transposition can translate into simpler rules, less bureaucracy, clearer information and better collaboration of public authorities for law enforcement.

Finally, today's debate confirms the information presented in the BUSINESSEUROPE comparative report released today. Just over a year is left until the transposition deadline and Member States are progressing at very different speeds. Some are lagging behind on the transposition running track. The transposition is challenging and complex, this is why a strong political commitment is required for its success.

This brings me to the main message that European business would like to convey to Member States: For a high quality and uniform transposition of this important directive, you need to get a move on with services!

BUSINESSEUROPE has a set of key recommendations or priorities for action that we urge national governments, including those of the European Economic Area, to take on board during the remaining time for transposition:

- 1 Stronger political support and increased efforts at all levels (central, regional and local) is needed to meet the transposition deadline of 28 December 2009.
- 2 Efforts between the Commission and Member States to ensure uniform transposition are welcome. However, consultation with representative stakeholders, including the leading national business federations, is not satisfactory and must be strengthened.
- 3 National screenings should be speeded up and result in the simplification and modernisation of existing rules. They should cover all relevant sectors and involve stakeholders fully.
- 4 The point(s) of single contact are one of the main breakthroughs of the directive especially for service providers. But for them to be useful, they must be adequately equipped and staffed to fulfil, also at distance, the two tasks set out in the directive: provision of the relevant information and completion of formalities.
- 5 The use of electronic procedures and their interoperability must be fully developed because they are crucial for facilitating access to information and completion of formalities. The use of foreign languages, particularly English, should also be promoted to make use of the point(s) of single contact easier for providers from other Member States.
- 6 Legal certainty and transparency are key for the smooth functioning of the single market. An EU-wide public registry (e.g. a website) should be created with all information on the national transposition of the Services Directive. It should be available in all EU languages and updated regularly.
- 7 Finally, national governments with the assistance of the Commission should organise a broad communication campaign targeting citizens and companies, particularly SMEs, to explain the advantages and opportunities created by the directive.



I hope that these recommendations will be followed by national governments in order to implement the Services Directive in a correct and coherent manner. BUSINESSEUROPE and its national member federations will continue to contribute to this endeavour.

I would like to thank you all once again for having participated in this event and especially the speakers for their interventions. I hope you have enjoyed it and I would now like to invite you to join me at the cocktail reception for further discussions.
