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SPEECH

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Plenary Session, report on Workshop 3 "Doing business made easier: the "Points of Single Contact"

Rapporteur: Guido Lobrano, BUSINESSEUROPE

Why is this important?

- Let me start by explaining what Points of Single Contact (PSCs) are: PSCs are online portals that were set up under the Services Directive to help service providers wishing to operate across Europe, for example by providing information and helping entrepreneurs to complete administrative formalities entirely online in different Member States.

- Let me give you a brief snapshot of the current situation as it emerged from yesterday's workshop:

   - Services represent around 75% of EU GDP.
   - 9 out of 10 new jobs in Europe are created in the services sectors.

- However, the Single Market for services is still lacking a substantial cross-border dimension. Trade in services represents only 20% of total cross-border trade in Europe.

- It is clear that integrating further the Single Market for services can boost Europe's growth, create a lot of new jobs and provide better services to citizens.

- The first step to achieve this is fully and correctly implementing the Services Directive. This includes creating a well-functioning PSC in every Member State to provide entrepreneurs with a comprehensive online one-stop-shop that can help them do business across borders.

Challenges:

Achieving this presents a number of challenges, the more striking ones being:

- 3 Member States have still not put in place a "first generation" online PSC portal.

- Another crucial aspect is that administrative formalities must be radically simplified to make them work better.

- Language barriers are still very relevant and must be overcome.

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Recommendations:

This leads me to the recommendations that emerged from yesterday's Workshop discussion:

1) PSCs should develop into full "e-government centres" that give businesses the possibility to complete administrative procedures entirely online, and provide them with more complete information, also on issues such as taxation, labour law and social security. All these features must be made available in different languages.

2) The second recommendation is to better promote the existence and benefits that the PSCs can bring to their potential users.

3) It is also key to highlight that PSCs give a good return on investment:

   - On the one hand, the resources they need are compensated by the fact that they can make a Member State more attractive for foreign companies, thereby boosting its economy.

   - On the other hand, they have a high cost-cutting potential, acting as a lever at national level to simplify administrative formalities and make them more efficient.

4) Overcome technical barriers to cross-border use of the PSCs. Among other things, this means improving interoperability and mutual recognition of e-identification and e-signatures.

In conclusion, what we need is a shift from the current compliance perspective to a **competitiveness focus**, where the PSCs will go beyond what they are required to do by law and provide companies with all that is needed to perform better and create more growth!

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http://webcast.ec.europa.eu/eutv/portal/index.html