

Implementation of the Services Directive 2006/123/EC

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The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection adopted the report by Evelyne GEBHARDT (S&D, DE) on the implementation of the Services Directive 2006/123/EC.

It begins by noting that the activities covered by the Services Directive account for 40% of EU GDP and jobs. The objective of the Services Directive is to unlock the enormous economic and job-creation potential of the European internal market in services, estimated at 0.6-1.5% of EU GDP. Members draw attention to the unprecedented public and political debate on the Services Directive and the key role of the European Parliament in that negotiation. They consider that Parliament should provide effective monitoring of the process of implementation of the Directive by the Member States, and want the Commission to keep Parliament regularly informed of the state of transposition.

The committee states that transposition of the Services Directive is a major challenge for Member States, public administrations and local authorities. The Directive's impact on the economy, businesses and citizens cannot be evaluated until it has been fully and properly transposed in all Member States, Members invite the Commission to monitor closely the application of the Directive in all Member States and to issue regular implementation reports, which should take into account the real medium- and long-term effects of the Directive on employment in the EU. They acknowledge the potential of the Services Directive for the further integration of the EU economy and the re-launch of the single market, as services account for a significant share of GDP and employment in the EU. After full transposition it is crucial that a comprehensive assessment should be carried out of the impact of the Services Directive.

The report outlines concrete proposals for Member States to improve the implementation of the Services Directive.

Evaluation process: the report calls on the Commission and Member States to work together in order to promote the development of the internal market for services on the basis of the mutual evaluation process that is provided for in the Services Directive and that is currently being transposed by the Member States. It considers that the evaluation process is an important tool in determining how implementation of the Directive is progressing in Member States, but that the state of progress with the process does not yet allow its effectiveness to be evaluated. The process in question must examine whether the rules in force in Member States correspond to the specifications of the internal market and do not create new obstacles. Members want the Commission to carry out a thorough investigation of the potential of this new method in the context of the [Single Market Act](#). They regret the fact that the European Parliament and national parliaments are not more involved in the mutual evaluation process.

Scope: Members recall that the Directive excludes a number of fields from its scope, including non-economic services of general interest, healthcare services and most social services. They note that the majority of Member States did not encounter significant problems during the implementation of the Services Directive with regard to its scope. The committee calls for thorough monitoring of the application of the restrictions provided for in the Directive in respect of services of general economic interest, while respecting the division of competences with the Member States, pointing out also that the Directive does not affect the freedom of Member States to define what they consider to be services of general economic interest.

Points of single contact (PSCs): the committee calls on Member States to develop the PSCs into comprehensive eGovernment portals for service providers wanting to set up a business or provide cross-border services. Member States are asked to continue improving the accessibility of PSCs, including by allowing procedures and formalities to be completed through PSCs remotely, by electronic means. They should also improve the quality of the information and procedures available to its users, in particular SMEs, including information and the completion of procedures under labour and tax law relevant to service providers. All information given by PSCs should also be available in languages other than national, taking into consideration especially the languages of neighbouring countries. The Commission should make a direct electronic link to the Member States' PSCs available to service providers in all the EU official languages.

Members regret that the advice offered by PSCs does not yet reach prospective service providers and that information on how to contact PSCs is not widely known. They call on the Commission to earmark appropriate funds in its draft budget for 2012 to launch a major Europe-wide PSC promotion campaign to raise awareness of what PSCs can offer service providers. The Commission and Member States are asked to launch well-targeted promotion, information and training campaigns as soon as possible, and to improve the visibility and recognisability of the eu-go domain and to feature case studies of businesses using the PSCs and the benefits they have derived.

Administrative cooperation: the report draws attention to the importance of the provisions on administrative cooperation and mutual assistance, and welcomes the growing number of enrolments by the competent national authorities for monitoring of services through the internal market information system (IMI). It also considers it useful to establish cooperation within a European network formed by the Member States' public authorities and to set up an interchange of information on the reliability of service providers, with a view to eliminating additional controls applied to cross-border activities.

Lastly, Members underline the need to develop training schemes for the officials of national and regional administrations responsible for monitoring services. They recognise the efforts Member States have already made to that effect and call on Member States to consolidate the national IMI networks by continuously monitoring their practical working and ensuring adequate training. Since the sustainable success of IMI depends on adequate investment at Community level. The committee calls on the Commission to set up a multiannual programme for that purpose and to bring to bear all the resources required for its smooth operation.