Freedom to supply services and workers' rights: posting of workers

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PURPOSE : to present the report on the implementation of Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services. CONTENT : Directive 96/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services was adopted on 16 December 1996. It aims to abolish the obstacles and uncertainties that impede implementation of the freedom to supply services, by improving legal certainty and facilitating identification of the employment conditions that apply to workers temporarily employed in a Member State other than the Member State whose legislation governs the employment relationship. Since the Directive is a supranational legal instrument whose transposal in one Member State directly affects employers and workers in other countries, the manner in which it is actually implemented is particularly important for all Member States. Article 8 provides that the Commission shall review the operation of the Directive with a view to proposing the necessary amendments to the Council where appropriate. In preparation for this review, the Commission services have taken a number of steps: the first was to draft a report on the transposal of the Directive in the 15 Member States, designed to ascertain the present situation as regards national legislations and collective agreements. At the same time, the national administrations were sent a questionnaire asking them to describe the practicalities of applying the Directive and any difficulties encountered. The results of the transposal study and the replies to the questionnaire were discussed by a group of government experts. The purpose of this Communication is to draw the conclusions from all this preparatory work concerning the transposal and practical implementation of Directive 96/71/EC in the Member States, and to define the Commission's position as to whether the 1996 Directive needs revising. The Communication does not seek to judge the compatibility with the Directive and the Treaty of the national transposing measures mentioned herein, nor does it prejudge what position the Commission will take in its monitoring of the application of Community law. The purpose of this Communication is to draw the conclusions from all this preparatory work concerning the transposal and practical implementation of Directive 96/71/EC in the Member States, and to define the Commission's position as to whether the 1996 Directive needs revising. The Communication does not seek to judge the compatibility with the Directive and the Treaty of the national transposing measures mentioned herein, nor does it prejudge what position the Commission will take in its monitoring of the application of Community law. The results of the studies of the transposition of Directive 96/71/EC, as outlined above, are broadly corroborated by the Member States' answers to a questionnaire on the practical application of the provisions arising from the Directive, and by the conclusions of the group of government experts. This group's conclusions can be summarised as follows: - None of the Member States has encountered any particular legal difficulties in transposing the Directive. - It seems premature to consider amending the Directive. These opinions and positions indicate to the Commission that it is not necessary to amend the Directive. The difficulties encountered in implementing it have so far tended to be more of a practical nature than a legal nature. Consequently, as things stand at present the Commission will not be presenting a proposal for a directive amending the arrangements for implementing the posted workers Directive.