



## European Confederation of Equipment Distributors

### **ECED Position on the Proposed Directive concerning Services in the Internal Market (“Bolkestein Directive”)**

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ECED, the European Confederation of Equipment Distributors ([www.eced-association.org](http://www.eced-association.org)), is the European trade federation of national professional associations that represent companies active in the field of distribution, rental, maintenance and repair of equipment for construction, civil engineering, mining, forestry and handling.

As a European-wide federation of service providers, in the process of “enlarging” its membership to the 10 new Member States, ECED feels very concerned about the far-reaching consequences that the “Bolkestein Directive” will have on the activities in the sectors and on the businesses (all SME’s), which ECED represents.

Since the first appearance of this proposal to liberalise the Internal Market for Services, ECED has been monitoring its evolution, and in particular the reactions and concerns it has raised among national authorities, EU and national trade unions and federations. ECED has always maintained a policy of explaining this Directive and its details and consequences to its members (it was the subject of internal circulars and presentations).

Nevertheless, in light of the new developments, whereas the European Commission has declared its readiness to review parts of the proposal, and to listen to stakeholders’ voices, ECED feels the time is right to show its willingness to co-operate within the EU in order to make sure the final draft of the Directive takes into account its concerns, which are fundamentally alike to all other trade federations.

Its main concern lies in the fact that ECED does not feel the proposed timetable to be realistic. To achieve a genuine Internal Market for Services by 2010 seems practically impossible without creating major problems within the 25 Member States’ economies. Therefore the timetable should be decoupled from the “Lisbon Objectives”, which have recently been reviewed, and more adapted to economic reality.

ECED already experiences how difficult it is to operate as a European trade federation in the 10 new Member States, because of the large differences between the economies and politics. Our strategy is therefore one for the longer term, since ECED is prepared to help the relevant businesses in the new Member States to create their own national professional associations.

In this light, the country of origin principle should only come into force when it is clear that the rules of establishment and provision of services have been harmonised to a relatively high standard, in order to prevent the movement of service providers to the most permissive Member States. Also, in order to maintain a certain quality of services, and adequate social, environmental and economical protection for workers, consumers and businesses, both efficient control mechanisms by the EU and self-regulatory frameworks by the sector need to be set up.

ECED is ready to set up sectoral and inter-sectoral Codes of Conduct, relating to *deontology* and demands on quality of the services as well as competence of the service providers and their workers, and consequently asks the EU authorities to provide effective enforcement and recognition measures, as would be the case for acknowledged regulated professions. Co-operation and teamwork within the concerned sectors, but also with regard to the national and EU authorities is urgently needed!

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