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Probably better with no services directive at all

The European Parliament voted today for a new services directive. But with a number of limitations and derogations the directive risks to lose its purpose.

"I am extremely disappointed at the vote in the Parliament, comments Urban Bäckström, Director-General of the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise. This is like shooting yourself in the foot. The European economy will now as a consequence continue to drag along while our main competitors around the world will try to maximize their competitive edge that globalization makes possible and thus further increase their lead over Europé. As far as I know this is the first time a Swedish government has voted for such a protectionist proposition.

The whole purpose with the directive was to facilitate cross-border trade with services in Europé, leading to higher growth, increased well-being of its citizens as well as more and better jobs. The European Parliament now instead seems to believe that the important thing is to maintain an outdated guild system with protective measures, bureaucracy and social rights.

What really worries me, continues Bäckström, is the myriad of contradictory amendments that the Parliament has voted through. This will create a legal situation that could only be detrimental to European business and thus to society as a whole. Instead of the much needed clarity a feeling of uncertainty has crept in. This is of course a big draw-back for the future of trade in services in Europé. The Parliament has not passed the test as a credible lawmaker.

If a directive for trade in services in Europé will look this way, we would probably be better off without one.

For more information, please contact:

Christian Ardhe, Svenskt Näringsliv Bryssel, +46 0032 2501 5307