

# 'Points of Single Contact' now a reality for business

*The transposition deadline of the Services Directive expired end 2009. By that date all EU countries had to have set up so-called 'Points of Single Contact' (PSC). PSC are e-government portals designed to facilitate doing business at home or abroad. By clicking on a Member State's PSC, businesses can obtain all relevant information and complete administrative formalities online without having to contact a whole series of authorities, as was previously the case.*

## Points of Single Contact linked by EU Webgate

Since the beginning of January, a 'first generation' of PSC has been operational in a majority of Member States. To make it easier for businesses to identify the PSC in all Member States, the Commission has set up a central EU webgate containing links to all European PSCs (accessible at: [http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/eu-go/](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/eu-go/))

## Conference

On 4 February 2010 the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU hosted a conference on the PSC in Brussels. The aim of the event was to raise awareness of the PSC and to have a first exchange of experience regarding their practical functioning. High-level representatives from the Czech Republic, the UK, France, Germany and the Netherlands presented the PSC solutions they set up in their countries.

## Huge reduction of administrative burden

All speakers agreed that the setting-up of the PSC has raised considerable technical and organisational challenges, but that these efforts will pay off for European SMEs. 'The PSC will significantly simplify life for SMEs and stimulate the creation of new businesses. We expect an average usage of 15,000 visitors per day on our PSC website', said Philippe Léglise-Costa, deputy Permanent Representative of France. Marc Hameleers, project manager of the Dutch Services Directive implementation team, emphasised that the Services Directive and the PSC 'have the potential to reduce administrative burden in our country by more than 60 million euro per year'.

The business perspective was presented by Giovanni Campi of Eurochambers and Carlos Almaraz of BusinessEurope. 'The PSC are the 'face' of the Services Directive and they are the key tool through which businesses can make use of their rights', said Campi, emphasising that 'it is now crucial that those Member States who are late, rapidly increase their efforts and deliver fully operational PSC'. Almaraz urged Member States to make information available in more than one language, in particular in English, stressing that 'the PSC will only make a difference if they are user-friendly and easily understandable for all businesses. Many Member States are still only providing information in their own language'.

## More exchanges to come

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*(Dutch government official)*

Discussions showed that there is strong interest from national administrations and businesses to continue work and enhance the functioning of the PSC in the coming years. In particular, the idea to maintain close cooperation and exchange of best practice between Member States was widely supported. Jana Reinisova, deputy Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic, concluded the conference by announcing that a follow-up event will be organised in autumn this year.

