

This edition of the newsletter will deal with the following topics:

1. The Commission consults on the Services Directive
2. Global Real Estate Transparency Index 2010
3. Housing Ministers meet in Spain
4. Belgian presidency of the EU
5. Water efficiency of buildings

1. The Commission consults on the Services Directive

The 2006 Services Directive provides for a new working method known as the "mutual evaluation process". This means that EU Member States, as well as analysing their own laws relating to services, will mutually evaluate the reviewed national measures. The Commission has now launched a consultation, the objective of which is to obtain feedback from consumers, businesses and other interested parties as to their assessment of national measures implementing the Services Directive as well as other existing national provisions applicable in the area of services.

Not all national implementing measures or existing national provisions are the object of this consultation. It applies **only** to certain types of measures relating to requirements imposed either on the establishment of service providers or on the cross border provision of their services. These are laws, regulations or professional rules that companies and individuals have to comply with when they want to establish their business in an EU Member State or when providing cross-border services into another EU country.

The Commission wants views as to whether or not the requirements which have been maintained by Member States (such as authorisation schemes, requirements as to the provision of a service) comply with the principles of the Directive or should have been modified or abolished. The consultation covers both new legislation implementing the Directive and existing legal provisions which have not been changed. There is an overview as to the situation in each of the Member States at

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/2010/services_directive_en.htm .

The questionnaire published with the consultation asks you to say (for a particular country and service sector) whether or not you consider that there are requirements which are unnecessarily burdensome and/or discriminatory, and why.

The CEPI Secretariat is very interested in your views on this topic. The Services Directive and its implementation is a very important issue for property professionals. Several CEPI member associations have expressed concern that the implementation of the Directive (by for example the abolition of authorisation schemes) is imposing a form of deregulation.

If you wish to respond directly to the consultation replies to the questionnaire should be sent to MARKT-SERVICES-CONSULTATION@ec.europa.eu . Please make sure that you send a copy of your reply to the Secretariat. If we receive enough replies we can submit a joint reply on behalf of CEPI. Your views can also be used to establish a common position which will express shared concerns and can also be used to make your views known to the European authorities.

The deadline for replies to the consultation is **13 September 2010**. The Commission has published a consultation paper and questionnaire which are both available (in English, French and German) at http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/2010/services_directive_en.htm.

2. Global Real Estate Transparency Index 2010

International firm Jones Lang La Salle has published its 2010 report on the transparency of global real estate markets. It is interesting to note the relative position of the European markets, with the United Kingdom, followed by Sweden and Ireland as being the most transparent European markets. A number of EU Member States are "semi" transparent, with the least transparent being Slovenia. However 9 of the 15 most improving markets are in Europe. The report makes the point that in many markets progress towards transparency has slowed due to the difficult market conditions caused by the financial crisis. However transparency should encourage investment and recovery, although the market remains cyclical. The development of higher professional standards by estate agents is a means of improving the transparency of markets, and the report makes the point that professional standards tend to be high in such markets.

A copy of the report is available at http://www.joneslanglasalle.com/Pages/greti_home.aspx.

3. Housing Ministers meet in Spain

The informal meeting of EU housing ministers in Spain on 21-22 June resulted in a declaration (known as the Toledo Declaration) on urban development. The meeting is informal because housing is not a matter of EU competence. Nevertheless it is interesting to see matters relating to housing being discussed at a European level and the views expressed by the housing ministers are important for the housing sector.

This year's meeting placed a strong emphasis on the importance of the energy efficiency of buildings. In particular there was a focus on the renovation of the existing housing stock. The declaration supports the acknowledgment of the importance of the renovation and physical upgrading of existing stock. Boosting energy efficiency in existing buildings (by improving the thermal insulation of exterior walls, roofs and glazing, and the efficiency of heating and other installations) considering the physical conditions of the building stock, must be included amongst the key issues for the regeneration of cities. It is also important from an economic viewpoint as building retrofitting is a fairly labour-intensive sector and a potential source of new jobs.

Putting into practice the commitment to urban regeneration and the integrated approach put forward in the declaration calls for a new "urban alliance" of all the actors involved in the process of building cities. This includes the property sector and professionals.

A copy of the declaration is available at http://www.europolitics.info/pdf/gratuit_en/275106-en.pdf.

4. Belgian presidency of the EU

Belgium took over the rotating presidency of the EU on 1 July. The priorities which have been identified (as part of a joint 18 month programme with Spain and Hungary) are:

- socio-economic issues including a package of measures to increase the surveillance of financial markets, promote green jobs, innovation and the transition to a "green knowledge economy";
- social issues including services of general interest and pension reform;
- environment and climate change including the use of taxation;
- justice and home affairs including the mutual recognition of court rulings;
- external relations.

Preparatory work will also continue with the new Energy Efficiency Action Plan which is due to be adopted in 2011. The website of the Belgian presidency is <http://www.eutrio.be>.

5. Water efficiency of buildings

As mentioned in CEPI.eu#46 the Commission plans to introduce legislation on energy efficiency standards for water. It is considering doing so by:

- extending the scope of the Eco-design Directive (to taps, toilets etc.);
- water-efficient design (for plumbing and air conditioning systems etc.);
- measuring the water performance of buildings (by introducing a system similar to that which now exists for buildings).

It is expected that there will be further discussion concerning these policy initiatives in 2011.