



Council of the  
European Union

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Council

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Subject: DECLARATION of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia,  
Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia on the competitiveness  
of the Single Market of the EU

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With a view to the Competitiveness Council on 20th of February 2017, Delegations will find annexed a DECLARATION of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia on the competitiveness of the Single Market of the EU.

**DECLARATION of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia on the competitiveness of the Single Market of the EU**

At the time when the European Commission is presenting a service package following its Single Market Strategy, that should facilitate the provision services in the EU and generate economic growth across the EU, European service providers are confronted with increasing number of obstacles that are often disproportionate, unjustified and are endangering their competitiveness.

The Single Market, in particular in road transport, is lately facing serious and unprecedented risks. We are witnessing a growing number of national measures cutting deeply into the freedoms upon which the EU is based, in particular the freedom to provide services in the Single Market. Transport is a vital element of the EU economy and limiting the possibility to provide the transport services within the Single Market will have negative spillover effect to other economic sectors important to the EU.

The European Union should therefore make its best efforts to preserve and improve the conditions in which transport companies are able to perform to their best potential. In this context it is vital to enhance our cooperation to eliminate unfair and illegal practices. However, unjustified national conditions and restrictions that have a disruptive impact on the transport sector cause fragmentation and harm the whole economy of the EU. In a longer term this will lead to the reduction of international competitiveness of the EU, the loss of jobs and businesses, in particular SME's.

Transport workers are the backbone of the transport industry. The EU should ensure that social standards are decent and can attract young workforce. It should be however kept in mind that social rights are in place to protect transport workers. The legal framework should therefore be easily understandable. Extensive application of the posting of workers EU legal framework on road transport is not a suitable solution as it creates complexities, barriers, excessive administrative burden, legal uncertainty and immediate serious disruption in the supply chain of goods in the EU. Consequently it may cause loss of jobs and diminished international competitiveness of the EU. The EU should carefully reconsider whether this is the way to go.

We call upon the European Commission to be strong in protecting the single market upon which the jobs of thousands of Europeans depend. Protectionist national legislations that cause fragmentation of internal market, excessive administrative burden and legal uncertainty should not be tolerated. The European Commission should rigorously and consistently perform its duties as a guardian of the Treaties and to vigorously oversee the implementation of the EU law in the Member States with a view to ensure the uninhibited functioning of the internal market.

It is of utmost importance that the European Commission proposes revised, proportional and evidence based legal framework for road transport without further delay in order to preserve well-functioning single market and fair competition.

Finally we strongly believe that now it is the time that the Member States and the EU Institutions join the forces and make a real effort to strengthen the Single Market for services and safeguard the principle of free movement of services.

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