

# European Parliament Slams Door in Face of Millions of Direct Sellers / Press Release

At its vote today, the European Parliament failed to support millions of direct sellers in the EU. The European Parliament's Committee on Internal Market and Consumers affairs adopted an opinion on a new proposal for law (the Consumer Rights Directive1), which aims to create a Single Market for direct selling. The opinion leaves little hope for neither the direct sellers nor the companies.

"Today, there is no Single Market for direct selling" explains SELDIA Chairman Philippe Jacquelinet, himself a CEO of a medium sized enterprise, "If I want to expand from my home market France, to say Spain or the UK, I have to hire many lawyers, translators and consultants to understand the local laws. Heavy investments are then required to adjust my distribution to the local environment. This has nothing to do with different levels of consumer protection, but historically different rules. It is the task of the EU politicians to harmonise these rules in the benefit of business and consumers. In this case, the politicians have let us down massively".

The European Parliament goes against harmonisation as it proposes: - countries can chose their own threshold below which

the law would not apply; - countries can keep their own rules with respect to banning payment by the consumer; - countries can keep their own rules with respect to information requirements (from e-Commerce and Services Directives). The direct selling sector offers opportunities to over 4 million people in the EU, 80% of which are women. They will be reluctant to sell across the border if rules are different from country to country. The 27 EU Member States have come to a similar conclusion at the end of last year, eliminating most proposals for harmonisation.

"The European Commission is partly to blame for its own loss", says SELDIA Executive Director Maurits Bruggink, "it wanted to integrate our sector specific issues into a proposal that would cover almost the entire distribution sector. This has proved way too ambitious and now that the general provisions have been voted out by European Parliament and Member States, there seemed to be no more energy and will to negotiate harmonisation for our sector. Our hope is that with the removal of the general provisions, a better proposal can be worked out in the future for our sector. Also, we will soon launch a campaign to remove national restrictions to direct selling."

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## Notes to the editor:

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SELDIA ([www.seldia.eu](http://www.seldia.eu)) is the leading representative body for the direct selling sector, whose members include 27 European Direct Selling Associations (DSAs), 22 of which in EU Member States. FeDSA represents directly through its corporate members and indirectly through the national associations over 1,000 direct selling companies with annual sales in excess of 14 billion Euro and 11 million independent direct sellers. Direct selling is the marketing of consumer goods and services directly to consumers on a person-to-person basis, generally in their home or the home of others, at their workplace and other places away from permanent retail locations. Direct selling typically occurs through explanation or demonstration by salespeople referred to as direct sellers.

**Direct Selling in Europe - 2010 Retail Sales**  
(based on 2010 data - in million € - VAT excl)

Countries	Sales (in million €)	Salesforce			Nr. of employees in DS companies	Selling methods	
		Nr	% women	% part-time		Person to Person	Party Plan
Austria (2)	199.700	14600	55%	75%	na	na	na
Belgium	158.858	17548	72%	64%	801	12%	77%
Bulgaria	49.120	130136	85%	80%	152	91%	9%
Czech Rep (1)	300.000	221000	92%	94%	301	99%	1%
Denmark	46.960	72583	60%	93%	na	50%	50%
Estonia	12.862	21000	95%	na	68	95%	5%
Finland	174.000	80000	80%	92%	200	62%	36%
France	1809.000	300000	78%	80%	3286	64%	36%
Germany	2840.000	660968	73%	90%	4746	62%	37%
Greece	163.574	154846	na	na	400	na	na
Hungary	98.840	239024	78%	86%	559	97%	3%
Ireland	54.300	22000	75%	85%	347	82%	18%
Italy (1)	2421.311	390482	75%	94%	1490	64%	36%
Latvia	17.187	25900	94%	na	90	81%	19%
Lithuania	23.632	30500	94%	na	244	75%	25%
Luxembourg	10.000	600	100%	100%	na	na	na
Netherlands (1)	94.923	30489	80%	83%	557	81%	17%
Poland	577.790	875600	90%	85%	1608	95%	5%
Portugal	125.980	76101	na	na	129	na	na
Romania	177.127	272724	82%	11%	497	97%	3%
Slovakia	71.710	98980	na	na	140	90%	10%
Slovenia	19.000	30000	65%	80%	90	15%	85%
Spain	447.000	202000	86%	86%	1700	na	na
Sweden	293.483	84175	77%	92%	500	57%	43%
UK (1) (3)	1397.400	442000	91%	94%	2000	86%	14%
<b>Total EU</b>	<b>11583.757</b>	<b>4493256</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>19905</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>30%</b>
Croatia	80.783	7670	60%	95%	60	85%	15%
Norway	91.492	81000	85%	10%	65	85%	15%
Russia	2465.655	4403104	91%	65%	5853	82%	18%
Switzerland	334.545	10151	53%	60%	na	na	na
Turkey	387.935	680656	90%	na	745	98%	2%
Ukraine	421.760	1352778	87%	na	na	na	na
<b>Total</b>	<b>15365.927</b>	<b>11028615</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>26628</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>27%</b>

(1) : Associations' members and non members

(2) Source : Euromonitor 2010

(3): Home improvement products included .

Euro exchange rate applied : European Central Bank 4.1.2011