



### DECLARATION OF THE EUROPEAN SERVICE INDUSTRIES TOWARDS THE LAUNCH OF A NEW WTO ROUND IN QATAR

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#### ESF CALLS FOR A NEW WTO ROUND

The European services industries as assembled in ESF call on the WTO Governments to make the utmost efforts to launch a new Round of trade negotiations at the Qatar WTO Ministerial in November 2001.

There is an evident interaction between trade in services, trade in goods and other trade-related issues. Real progress in liberalisation and the setting of rules for international trade with sufficient balances, certainties and transparency will best be served by an ambitious Round of negotiations that should be concluded by a single undertaking.

The volume of trade in services is already significant, amounting to € 1.55 trillion (\$1.35 trillion) in cross-border transactions in 1999. Services account for a very important part of gross domestic product in all countries of the world in both developed and developing country economies, representing between 50% to 75% of GDP in most countries of the world. Services play a key role in creating an enhanced investment in essential infrastructure of all economies, and in contributing to employment across the world. The liberalisation process will encourage efficient service industries, a fundamental component of attracting inward direct investment and promoting competition.

A substantial agreement on services will only be achieved in the context of a wider and broad based WTO Round. A new Round will help motivate success in the "request/offer" phase of the services negotiations, expected to begin soon after the Ministerial, and will allow all WTO members to get concrete results for each country, including all developing countries. A successful outcome of a Round offering trade market openings and certainty in services sectors will benefit all economies, in particular the developing economies where infrastructure investments in services like telecommunications, energy, transport, distribution, financial services, etc. will make a major contribution towards sustainable development and will facilitate their access to the world markets.

In the context of a new Round, the ESF underlines in particular the need for progress in three specific areas. The first is the movement of persons, where ESF has taken the lead in developing proposals to assist the temporary movement of key business personnel. The second is Domestic regulation, which is a crucial phase for the effective implementation of an agreement on services. The last issue is e-commerce, where there is a need for WTO rules to be applied in ways which will best assist its growth.

ESF calls on the WTO governments to include, in the Qatar Negotiating Mandate for a new Round, a clear standstill clause, which will apply inter alia to the GATS negotiations.

ESF strongly supports trade services liberalisation, taking into account the particular characteristics of individual services sectors, and closely follows the GATS negotiations that started in January 2000. ESF welcomed the adoption of the negotiating guidelines for the GATS negotiations adopted by the Council for Trade in Services in March 2001. What is needed now is a deadline. The new round should be of limited duration, lasting no more than three years.

#### **WHAT IS ESF :**

The European Services Forum (ESF) is a network of high-level representatives from the European services sector committed to promoting actively the interests of European services and the liberalisation of services markets throughout the world in connection with the GATS 2000 negotiations. It comprises more than 50 major European service companies and more than 30 European service sectors' Federations covering more than 20 service sectors, from banking to tourism, via telecommunications, air and maritime transport, many business and professional services, distribution, postal and express delivery, IT services, energy services, audiovisuals, etc.

ESF is determined to support and encourage the movement to liberalise service markets throughout the world and to remove trade and investment barriers for the European services sector, in particular in the fields of market access and national treatment.

For further information on the membership, position papers, etc., see [www.esf.be](http://www.esf.be). Comments can be sent to [esf@esf.be](mailto:esf@esf.be).