

Press Release

For immediate release
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PM urged not to back down over Temps Directive

The Institute of Directors (IoD) today appealed to the Prime Minister not to back down over the EU's Temporary Agency Workers Directive. Following his speech this week to the TUC Congress in which Mr Blair appeared to endorse the Directive as well as press briefings indicating that he would bow to union demands, the IoD said it had written to Downing Street seeking clarification of the Government's position.

The Directive would give temporary workers the same rights as their permanently employed colleagues in terms of pay, working hours and holidays.

In his letter to the Prime Minister, IoD Chairman, Chris Beale said:

"Temporary workers play a key role in our flexible labour market. Anything that would make it more difficult or burdensome to employ temporary staff would undermine this crucial aspect of the UK's competitiveness."

The EU debate has concentrated on proposals for a 'qualifying period' - the time that a temporary employee would have to serve before becoming entitled to the new rights. The Government has, thus far at least, supported the principle of the Directive but argued for an extended qualifying period of the order of six or twelve months, which would shield business from the worst of the impact. Some EU member states (and the trades unions) have argued for immediate entitlement - with no qualifying period at all. EU talks have failed to resolve this impasse.

Ends

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