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Consumer Rights Directive – The European Parliament plenary secures key exemptions for hotel and restaurants bookings

Brussels, 23 June 2011 – The trade association of hotels, restaurants and cafés in Europe (HOTREC*) welcomes today’s European Parliament plenary vote on the proposal for a Consumer Rights Directive as a positive move for the European hospitality industry. Indeed, the amendments adopted by the MEPs will lead to a considerable improvement of distance contracts regulation for hotels and restaurants across Europe. Ms. Anna Torres, CEO of HOTREC, commented: *“By opposition to earlier versions of this draft Directive, most hotel and restaurant bookings should not be negatively affected by the new requirements of the Directive, as the specific situation of the industry was duly taken into consideration and some key exemptions granted. This is overall a fair result and a success for HOTREC”*.

The Consumer Rights Directive is a very important proposal for hospitality businesses, as it intends to regulate distance contracts which are widely used by the industry. The amendments voted by the European Parliament in today’s plenary, and which were commonly agreed with the Council, shall ensure that hotel and restaurant bookings will not be covered by all the rules of the new Directive. More concretely, the agreed text exempts hotel and catering contracts from the provisions on the right of withdrawal, while restaurant bookings shall not be considered as distance contracts. Moreover, information requirements for on-premises contracts shall also not apply to classical restaurant contracts, while there would be no additional EU-wide rules for hotel contracts concluded by telephone when they imply a pre-payment.

These exemptions are essential for the European hospitality industry. Their withdrawal would seriously impair hotel and restaurant booking systems, which has proved very satisfactory both to businesses and consumers for many years. Ms. Torres further added: *“The specificities of hotel and restaurant services were fully recognised by the Rapporteur, Mr. Schwab, who did a tremendous work in the European Parliament and in the negotiations with the Council to achieve workable solutions for the hospitality industry”*.

Following this positive vote, the European hospitality industry now calls on the Council to endorse quickly the text voted by the European Parliament, as it was agreed during the informal negotiations which took place between the representatives of these two institutions.

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***HOTREC represents the hotel, restaurant and café industry at European level. The sector counts 1,7 million businesses, with almost 92% of them being micro enterprises employing less than 10 people. The industry provides some 9,5 million jobs in the EU alone. HOTREC brings together 43 National Associations representing the sector in 26 different European countries. For further information: www.hotrec.eu**

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