

Release: Immediate

Date: 1 December 2007

Issued by: Philip Bushill-Matthews MEP

Brussels: +32 (0) 2 28 45114

Strasbourg: +33 (0) 3 881 75114

## **Brown likely to face EU double-whammy on jobs**

Brussels, 1 December 2007 -- Just days after Gordon Brown promised British industry that "the flexibility you want as employers will be matched over time by more rights to request flexible working,"\* Labour may be about to impose less flexibility and make employing people doubly difficult.

At an EU Employment summit on December 5th, the Government will be pressed to accept an EU Agency Workers Directive which the CBI has said will "lead to less job opportunities and inhibit employers' ability to operate effectively". \*\* The result could be a major reduction in temp work in the UK, and the DTI has suggested that the total cost to agencies will be between £80 and £194 million and the cost for clients between £239 and £387 million.\*\*\*

This proposal is being pushed in part-exchange for allowing the UK to retain its individual opt-out from the Working Time Directive, to which the UK is already legally entitled. However the new draft, drawn up by the Portuguese presidency of the Council, would only allow UK workers to continue to opt out of the official 48 working hours per week limit if much tighter conditions were imposed - that UK firms say would further increase bureaucracy for employers and employees alike.

Philip Bushill-Matthews MEP, Conservative Employment Spokesman in the European Parliament says: **"Other Member States are taking advantage of the Prime Minister's growing weakness back home to form new alliances. There is a real danger that as Gordon Brown has taken his eye off yet another ball this "double deal" will go through."**

John Wright, National Chairman of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), who was in Brussels for a meeting with the Enterprise Forum added: **"Agency workers not only provide flexibility for businesses, but also offer choice to the EU's diverse labour force. We call on the Government to stand firm on this issue, which is crucial not only for SMEs but also for job-seekers".**

ENDS

Notes to editors:

\* Gordon Brown: Speech to the CBI, November 27th 2007:

[http://www.labour.org.uk/gb\\_speech\\_cbi](http://www.labour.org.uk/gb_speech_cbi)

\*\*

[http://www.cbi.org.uk/ndbs/positiondoc.nsf/1f08ec61711f29768025672a0055f7a8/D7EC8BC30BCE1E9A80256BEA004CBB77/\\$file/eu\\_agency\\_300502.pdf](http://www.cbi.org.uk/ndbs/positiondoc.nsf/1f08ec61711f29768025672a0055f7a8/D7EC8BC30BCE1E9A80256BEA004CBB77/$file/eu_agency_300502.pdf)

\*\*\*

[http://www.lawspeed.com/press/recruitment\\_consultancies/eu\\_agency\\_workers\\_directive.aspx](http://www.lawspeed.com/press/recruitment_consultancies/eu_agency_workers_directive.aspx)

Philip Bushill-Matthews MEP, tel: +33 (0) 3 881 75114  
or +44 (0) 7867 556407

[philip.bushill-matthews@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:philip.bushill-matthews@europarl.europa.eu)

Peter Wilding, Conservative Press Office, tel: +32 (0) 473 862761

[peter.wilding@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:peter.wilding@europarl.europa.eu)

John Wright, FSB, tel: 0207 592 8100

[nationalchairman@fsb.org.uk](mailto:nationalchairman@fsb.org.uk)