



RESOURCE 5

The Bolkestein Directive

The Bolkestein Directive (also called the Directive on services in the internal market) is a law passed by the EU in 2006 that created a single market for services and allowed European workers to move freely within European Union Member States to find employment. The new law was controversial as many Western European workers were fearful that migrant workers from Eastern Europe who charged less for their services would now have an unfair advantage over them and drive down prices. Mass protests took place and almost 100 000 people assembled in Brussels on 21 March 2005 to demonstrate against the Directive. The new law was implemented in all EU Member States on 28 December 2009.

The Directive is named after Frederik 'Frits' Bolkestein, the then European Commissioner who oversaw its creation.

'Polish plumber' beckons French

The Polish tourist board has come up with a seductive image of a Polish plumber to counter negative French rhetoric about east European workers.

The 'Polish plumber' – a symbol of cheap labour – became a catchphrase of the French 'No' camp during the referendum on the EU constitution.

'I'm staying in Poland – do come over,' says the new ad on the Polish tourist board's website for French visitors.

The site carries messages from French readers praising the ad's humour.

Elzbieta Janik, spokeswoman for the Polish tourist board, said she and her colleagues were 'annoyed that a negative image of Poland was being used by politicians... to avoid the real political problems'.

Image makeover

The ad was produced by the tourist board's Warsaw headquarters to 'help us create a positive image of Poland,' she told the BBC News website.

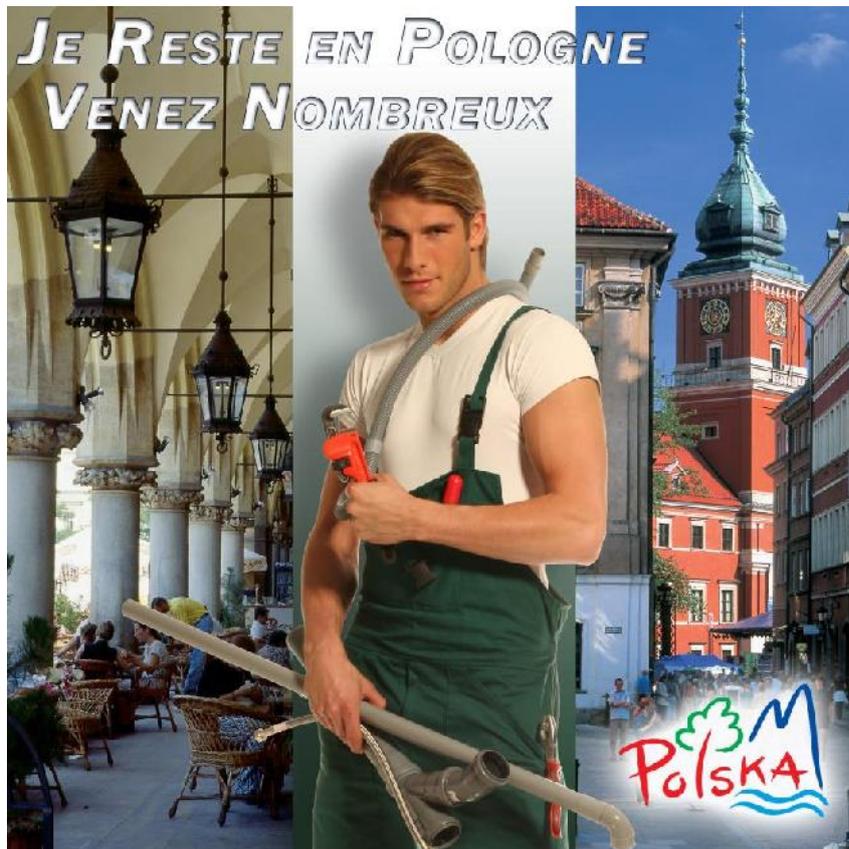
'We have been given a label we don't deserve. After all, France has plenty of Spanish stone masons, Portuguese workers...'

'This was a humorous response to the political debate – we wanted to tell the French: 'Despite the bad words about Poland you are welcome', she said.

She added that posters and T-shirts bearing the handsome Polish plumber image might also be produced.

'French people have phoned up to congratulate us. They told us: 'We're not dupes, we know Polish plumbers are not to blame', she added.

Source: BBC News



New 'Polish plumber': A humorous counterblast from the east

Source: *BBC News* © Polish Tourist Organisation

Frederik Bolkestein, the EU Commissioner, sought to defend his proposed reform, saying he would be eager to see Polish plumbers apply for work in his neighbourhood 'because it's very difficult to find an electrician or a plumber where I live in northern France.'

His comments drew sharp criticism in France. Rémi Pavros, mayor of Maubeuge, the main city near Bolkestein's French home, sent the former Commissioner an open letter telling him he would find no fewer than 13 electricians and plumbers in the local yellow pages.

Source: [Privatizationbarometer](#)