

SIMA 2010, May 20

Introductory speech of Timo Multanen, President of CEPI

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As President of CEPI and on behalf of the 41 CEPI member associations and over 250.000 agents, property managers and valuers throughout Europe, I would like to congratulate the organizers of the fair and of the International Programme for this initiative, that notwithstanding the important economic and financial crisis really answers market as well as communication needs within the real estate sector in Spain, Europe and abroad.

**Indeed, Europe is facing developments that are of crucial importance to the real estate markets and professions. The current and strong economic turbulences and the political answers to it call for more competition, more technical management and more challenging consumers. Real estate associations must take on proactive action with regard to professional qualifications, consumer protection and fair competition. Active lobbying needs to be done to ensure proper legislation and regulation in Brussels and in Madrid. Education and training programmes should be at the very heart of the service provision. More research capacity should feed dialogue between stakeholders in Europe. But even so important will be our capacity to communicate, exchange information and experience cross border, and so learn from each other.**

Within Europe and even abroad, SIMA efficiently contributes to the communication need, and it is so becoming a reference for real estate professionals. It provides opportunities for professionals of all over Europe to meet, learn and make business. Reason enough for the 250.000 professionals of the CEPI network to hear about it and get an invitation to participate.

CEPI and ICREA are taking advantage of SIMA 2010 to launch the beta version of the brand new European Property website called WorldProperties.eu. May I herewith invite you all to join us this Friday (tomorrow) at the International Stand, where this new site will be presented to you at 11.30am. It aims at facilitating business contacts between professionals who wish to sell or buy properties abroad and therefore need a good transnational referral system

Spain is and will remain an important RE market within Europe. Because of this importance, we can assume that Spanish professionals will be at the forefront of our efforts to improve business opportunities and strengthen professional practice. And we should also assume that the Spanish authorities take the lead in providing a legal and regulatory frame to easy transactions, provide necessary legal security to professionals and protect clients and consumers. Let me take advantage of this meeting to address a request to the Spanish authorities. As we all know, it is still the Member States' responsibility to decide on the conditions and modalities to access their market. But we also know that markets are increasingly interlinked. The European Services Directive tried to give a regulatory frame to facilitate and encourage professionals to think and act European. I can't therefore but encourage the Spanish authorities to support professional structures that must represent but also structure and direct the development of the real estate services, to the benefit of consumers. Liberalisation does not mean deregulation. And although deregulation appears to be a trendy word, I strongly state that it is not the best recipe to help the consumers and the professionals, as it is not the best possible guarantee to harmonise practice and ensure quality in a European, cross border market environment.

Dear participants in this International programme, I wish you very good, interesting and enjoyable days in Madrid.