



HEADLINES

EU/ Internal Market: 10 years without frontiers: benefits and challenges for the next decade

According to the report "The Internal Market - Ten years without frontiers", the Single European Market has created 2.5 million jobs and added 1.8 points to the EU's annual gross domestic product since 1993. The freedom of movement for people, goods, services and capital has generated a wide range of benefits for consumer and business including wider choice, cheaper prices and a better quality of consumer products. It is also easier for companies to do business across the EU.

However, in a press conference on 7 January, Commissioner Bolkestein highlighted various challenges to be met in order to fulfil the ambition of the Single Market, including tackling the problem of non-implementation (see our edition of 15.11.02 on the last implementation scoreboard). Mr Bolkestein also criticised the Member States' reluctance to approve new laws in areas such as financial services and biotechnology. Furthermore, he defended the idea of a more powerful Commission.

See the press release of 7 January 2003:

http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/03/7|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

See the full report:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/10years/docs/workingdoc_en.pdf

EU / Single Market: Working Group on better law making launched by the Council

A new working group is about to be launched to help implement the European Commission's Action Plan on Better Regulation, unveiled on 5 June 2002. It will begin to function once the inter-institutional agreement on better regulation has been signed.

The functions of the new working group include : preparing reports on the implementation of the Action Plan, improved coordination with the Member States, and reviewing the Commission's guidelines on consultation and impact assessment.

EU/ Corporate Social Responsibility: Multi-stakeholder Forum to enter roundtable meetings phase

The European Multi-stakeholder Forum on CSR (CSR EMS Forum), launched on 16 October 2002 to promote "innovation, transparency and convergence of CSR practices and instruments", will start its roundtable meetings in February. The roundtable meetings will focus on issues such as : improving knowledge on CSR, fostering CSR among SMEs, and establishing common guiding principles for CSR practices and instruments.

More

<http://forum.europa.eu.int>

info:

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IN BRIEF

EU/ Lisbon strategy: Commission to present report on implementation of Broad Economic Policy Guidelines

The Commission will this week present its report on the implementation of the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines (BEPGs), as well as its annual contribution to Spring Summit and a sketch of the new European Employment Strategy". The three papers are expected to be submitted in Brussels on 21 March.

EU / Industrial Policy in an Enlarged Europe - 21 January conference update

EU Competitiveness Council President Mr A. Tsohatzopoulos will join Commission President R. Prodi in contributing to the conference of January 21, aimed at launching a broad public debate on the future EU industrial policy. Registration deadline has been extended until 15 January.

More

info:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/industry/conference/index.htm

Reminder: Renewal of the Enterprise Policy Group Professional Chamber

The deadline for applications to join the Enterprise Policy Group's Professional Chamber, is 27 January 2003. The EPG is a high-level advisory group bringing together, in one section top national officials responsible for small business and enterprise policy and in the other, top executives from a wide range of business interests, with extensive experience of small business.

ESBA members have the possibility to suggest candidates : If you would like to nominate somebody, please make sure to send us a detailed Curriculum Vitae before 20th January.

More info: <http://europa.eu.int/>

EU / Shoppers' rights: Commission acts to protect EU shoppers' rights

The governments of Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the UK have been sent a Reasoned Opinion over their failure to implement the Guarantees Directive (1999/44/EC), laying down a minimum legal rights for consumers buying goods in the EU. These rights includes the rights to return defective good, or have them repaired or replaced, up to two years after delivery.