



HEADLINES

EU / SINGLE MARKET Brussels 17/04/2001: Single market review confirms lack of progress

The second review of the internal market strategy, issued by the European Commission this week, confirms previous indications (review of the Internal Market Strategy of last year, results of the Stockholm Summit, recent speech by Romano Prodi for the European Parliament,.) that progress in improving the performance of the internal market, which is at the heart of the Lisbon strategy, has been rather disappointing and that there exists a gap between rhetoric and reality. Only 20 out of 36 scheduled actions and 8 out of 12 priority actions are expected to be completed by June 2001, and only three Member States met the target (1,5%) of reducing their transposition deficits. Aside assessing progress since last year, the review builds on the strategy published in November 1999 (designed to develop the Internal Market over the next five years) to set the direction of the internal market policy, by targeting specific policies and actions, for the coming 18 months. Due to the lack of progress so far, the priority target actions for the coming period are mainly leftovers from last year, such as: more competition and liberalisation of transport, procurement and utilities sectors, and completion of an integrated market for capital and financial services. The review also focuses on the need to improve the quality of the regulatory frameworks.

More detailed information on the internal market strategy, progress and plans: http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/en/update/strategy/index.htm The complete 2001 review can be downloaded at :

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/en/update/strategy/com198_en.pdf

EU / CONSUMER PROTECTION Brussels 20/04/2001: Further resistance to 'fair trade' plans

As reported already in January 2001 (see ESBA WEEKLY - Vol 3 - N 8) the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, David Byrne, is preparing a radical policy paper for protecting EU citizens against unfair business practices (including measures to ensure businesses do not use practices to evade the law and mislead the consumer via means of industry codes of conduct and the concept of co-regulation). The plans were to present the paper during the informal meeting of EU consumer ministers of next week. However, due to major concerns raised by the industry since the beginning, and more recently some major objections to the plans raised within the European Commission itself, it is rather likely that Byrne's plans will first go through an orientation debate within the Commission itself and a more wide consultation process with industry and other parties. In the mean time the European Commission has presented a number of studies (completed for the Commission) which deal with different aspects of the issue of 'fair trade':

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/policy/developments/fair_comm_pract/fair_comm_pract_index_en.html

UPCOMING EVENTS Brussels 23&24/04/2001: E-marketplaces: enterprise policy, competition and standardization; Theme: E-commerce, SMEs & Standardization Info: <http://www.europa.eu.int/Commission/enterprise/ict/e-marketplace.htm> Noordwijk aan Zee (NL) 10&11/05/2001: Concerted action seminar on Business Failure; Theme: Business failure, Entrepreneurship, Good practices. Info: <http://www.ez.nl/businessfailure/index.htm>

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Brussels 29/05/2001: Make it simple!; Theme: Enterprise Policy, SMEs, regulations. Info:
<http://www.unice.org>