



HEADLINES

EU / INTERNAL MARKET Brussels 17/09/2001: Standard forms for public tenders

As from 1 May 2002 onwards all public authorities in the EU will have to use (new) standard forms when publishing calls for tenders in the EU's Official Journal. Currently, such forms still differ from one EU member state to another (to a certain extent). By accepting the Directive, following the mandate to get in this field, the European Commission expects that the standard forms should increase transparency and efficiency, facilitate electronic procurement, provide more equal opportunities among businesses, thereby further encouraging SMEs to bid for public contracts. ESBA welcomes the new Directive as SMEs are still finding it extremely difficult to tap into this lucrative market. ESBA expresses the hope that the discussions on the proposals on the revision of the European procurement directives will advance as soon as possible as to further enhance SME participation.

More info: <http://simap.eu.int/EN/pub/src/comdirective.htm>

EU / TRADE Geneva 17/09/2001: WTO China negotiations concluded

The World Trade Organization (WTO) successfully concluded negotiations on China's terms of membership of the WTO, paving the way for the text of the agreement to be adopted formally at the WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar, in November. The WTO hereby concludes almost 15 years of negotiations with China and agreed to forward some 900 pages of legal text for formal acceptance by the 142 Member Governments of the WTO. Thirty days after China notifies its acceptance of the agreement, China legally becomes a member of the WTO. In 2000 China was the 7th leading exporter and 8th largest importer of merchandise trade, and 12th leading exporter and the 10th largest importer in commercial services. China has agreed to undertake a series of important commitments to open and liberalise its regime in order to better integrate in the world economy and offer a more predictable environment for trade and foreign investment in accordance with WTO rules. Some commitments undertaken by China: - Non-discriminatory treatment to all WTO Members; - Elimination of dual pricing practices; - No protection to domestic industries or services providers via price controls; - No export subsidies on agricultural products; - Implementation of the TRIPS agreement; and - Acceptance of a 12-year transition period in cases where Chinese imports cause market disruption to domestic producers of other WTO members; - Elimination of most restrictions for foreign companies after three years (with the exception of products such as cereals, tobacco, fuels and minerals). - Gradual elimination of trade barriers for goods and expanding market access for non-Chinese goods.

More info: http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres01_e/pr243_e.htm

EU / TRADE Brussels 18/09/2001: Lamy confirms: Doha will go on as planned

Following the dramatic events in the United States, one could question whether the upcoming Ministerial meeting of the WTO in November in Doha, Qatar, would and could go ahead as planned. The Doha Ministerial should decide on the launch of a new multilateral trade negotiation round. However, following earlier positive statements by the US government and the WTO, also EU

ESBA Bulletin of 21 September 2001 – Volume 3 – Number 38

Commissioner for Trade, Pascal Lamy, confirmed several times this week that work continues to maintain the November multilateral meeting for political reasons. The EC recently held preparatory meetings in Mexico, in Hanoi between Europeans and Asians, and will hold meetings still, as planned, in Nairobi between Europeans and Africans, in Singapore after that, and the APEC meetings in Shanghai. The WTO announced that it intends to circulate a draft text of a Ministerial Declaration for consideration by the end of September.

UPCOMING EVENTS Brussels (B) 21/09/2001: European day on entrepreneurship; Theme: Enterprise policy, SMEs, Corporate Social Responsibility. Info: http://www.csreurope.org/csr_europe/activities/activitiesframes.htm?content=communications/events/events.htm Cardiff (UK) 11&12/10/2001: Forum on Top Class Business Support Services; Theme: Enterprise Policy, MAP 2001-2005, SMEs, Entrepreneurship, Best Procedure. Info: <http://www.cardiff2001.org>