

MEUSAC Core Group discusses the Services Directive and the Small Business Act



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The Services Directive and the Small Business Act for Europe were discussed during the meeting of the Core Group of the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) held on Tuesday.

The Directive on services in the Internal Market (the "Services Directive" - 2006/123/EC) was adopted by the Council and the European Parliament at the end of 2006. Its objective is to help realising the full potential of the largest sector of the European economy - and the one where the great majority of new jobs are created - the services sector. Both businesses and consumers alike will enjoy more choice and greater competition from the opportunities that the Directive offers.

The Directive requires Member States to simplify administrative procedures so as to ease the administrative burden on an enterprise, thus ensuring that its services can be easily offered in other EU countries.

The Directive was adopted on December 12, 2006 and was approved by the Council and the European Parliament. It has to be implemented by Member States 3 years after its publication, not later than December 28, 2009.

In Malta, the process for implementation of the Directive is managed by the Ministry of Finance, Economy and Investment. The Ministry identified and is proposing to amend current legislation by means of the Services (Internal Market) Act, which was published as a Bill on October 2, 2009.

Members of the Core Group agreed that the implementation of the Directive will create better opportunities for industry at large.

The Small Business Act for Europe was adopted in 2008 and provides a comprehensive policy for the EU and its Member States through a set of 10 principles to guide the concept and implementation of policies both at EU level as well as at Member States level

Core Group members stated that the Public Sector should be more flexible in particular with regard to the services it offers to the private sector. Members mentioned that payments owed to the private sector by government authorities, including schemes such as the Employment Aid Programme and Training Aid Framework, should be processed more quickly so as not to lose EU funds. The introduction of schemes to facilitate the entry of women into the labour market was also noted.

Presentations were delivered by Mr Anton Spiteri from the Enterprise Policy Directorate within the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment.