



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

COMPETITIVENESS AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS



11.09.09

Single European Payments Area

COM(2009) 471 – Communication from the Commission Completing SEPA: a Roadmap for 2009-2012

To make the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA) a success, strong commitment by all actors concerned is required. Although the EPC (the decision-making and coordination body of the European banking industry in relation to payments) has successfully delivered the necessary schemes for SEPA Credit Transfers (SCT) and SEPA Direct Debits (SDD) and is working on card standards, SEPA migration is still slow.

This SEPA roadmap provides a framework for action to achieve full implementation and responds to the Commission Communication for the Spring European Council of 4 March 2009 where the Commission announced it would come forward by mid-2009 with proposals to ensure that the full benefits of a Single Euro Payments Area are realised.

This Roadmap identifies the actions to be completed by all stakeholders (EU and national authorities, industry and users) over the next three years, following six priorities:

- (1) Foster migration;
- (2) Increase awareness and promote SEPA products;
- (3) Design a sound legal environment and ensure compliance;
- (4) Promote innovation
- (5) Achieve standardisation and interoperability; and
- (6) Clarify and improve SEPA project governance.

Anti-dumping duties

COM(2009) 463 - Proposal for a Council Regulation imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty and collecting definitively the provisional duty imposed on imports of certain seamless pipes and tubes of iron or steel originating in the People's Republic of China

In July 2008 the Commission initiated antidumping proceedings concerning imports into the Community of certain seamless pipes and tubes of iron or steel originating in China. The proceedings were initiated following a complaint lodged by the Defence Committee of the



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Seamless Steel Tube Industry of the European Union on behalf of producers representing a major proportion of the total Community production of the said products.

In April 2009, the Commission imposed, by means of Regulation (EC) No 289/2009, a provisional anti-dumping duty on imports into the Community of the said products originating in China ranging from 15.1% to 24.2%.

In the proposed Regulation the Commission is proposing that a definitive anti-dumping duty ranging from 17.7% to 39.2% be imposed following the definitive conclusion resulting from the proceedings.

Mutual assistance for the recovery of claims

COM(2009) 451 – Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the use of the provisions on mutual assistance for the recovery of claims relating to certain levies, duties, taxes and other measures in 2005-2008

EC Member States provide mutual assistance to each other for the recovery of claims relating to certain levies, duties, taxes and other measures. The Commission is required to produce a regular report on the use of the mutual assistance arrangements. The present report relates to recovery assistance granted in 2005-2008. It also deals with the current Commission initiatives in this field.

In its previous report the Commission indicated that the statistics of various Member States contained certain inconsistencies. The statistics relating to the numbers of requests made in the period 2005-2007 in general show an important decrease in these inconsistencies, despite the fact that the number of requests has increased enormously.

Statistics provided by Member States show an increasing number of requests for assistance on the basis of the EC Directive. It also appears that the EC legislative framework is much more widely used between EC Member States than any other mutual recovery assistance agreement or arrangement.

The Commission concludes that the increase in the number of assistance requests demonstrates that Member States feel the need to work closely together in the fight against tax fraud. It also maintains that a further reinforcement of the existing legislation in this field is needed in order to cope with the increasing number of requests for assistance and to improve the efficiency of the recovery assistance.



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Anti-dumping duties

COM(2009) 450 - Proposal for a Council Regulation imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty and collecting definitively the provisional duty imposed on imports of certain aluminium foil originating in Armenia, Brazil and the People's Republic of China

In July 2008 the Commission initiated an anti-dumping proceeding concerning imports of certain aluminium foil originating in Armenia, Brazil and China. The Commission imposed provisional anti-dumping duties on these imports. Given that the provisional findings were confirmed, the Commission is proposing that the Council adopt the draft Regulation to impose a definitive anti-dumping duty and to definitively collect definitively the provisional duty.

Transport of dangerous goods by road

COM (2009) 446 - Proposal for a DIRECTIVE .../.../EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of [...] on uniform procedures for checks on the transport of dangerous goods by road (codified version)

The purpose of this proposal is to undertake a codification of Council Directive 95/50/EC on uniform procedures for checks on the transport of dangerous goods by road. The new Directive will supersede the various acts incorporated in it; this proposal fully preserves the content of the acts being codified and hence does no more than bring them together with only such formal amendments as are required by the codification exercise itself.

Innovation policy

COM(2009) 442 – Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Reviewing Community innovation policy in a changing world

Innovation enables European industries to position themselves at the upper end of the global value chain, making Europe the world market leader in energy and resource efficient products and technologies and equipping us with the means needed for global action. Moreover, only in an environment that supports innovation can R&D efforts result in real gains. That is why the re-launched Lisbon Partnership for growth and jobs has put innovation and entrepreneurship at the centre and called for decisive and more coherent action by the Community and the Member States.

Despite improvements, the EU innovation system continues to suffer from shortcomings that negatively influence the market rewards and incentives for private investment in innovation which as a consequence remains lower than that of our main competitors. The



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aim of this communication is to identify remaining gaps and propose policy orientations on how to fill them.

The Commission concludes this Communication by stating that making the EU a vibrant space for innovation requires continuous attention and calls for a better exploitation of the potential of the partnership between the Union and its Member States by taking more focussed and better coordinated actions at all levels.

Therefore, based on the analysis of achievements so far and the lessons learnt presented in this Communication, and as requested by the European Council, the Commission intends to explore the feasibility of proposing to the Member States before spring 2010 a European Innovation Act encompassing all the conditions for sustainable development and which would form an integral and crucial part of the future European reform agenda.

COM(2009) 370 - Proposal for a Council Regulation temporarily suspending autonomous Common Customs Tariff duties on imports of certain industrial products into the autonomous regions of Madeira and the Azores

The regional authorities of Madeira and Azores have made a request to introduce autonomous tariff suspensions in order to strengthen the competitiveness of the local economic operators and thus securing a more stable employment on these islands. They justified their request by stating that in view of the remoteness of those islands the economic operators suffer severe commercial disadvantages which have negative effects on demographic trends, employment and social and economic developments.¹

The proposed suspension of the Common Customs Tariff duties allows the local economic operators in Madeira and Azores to import a certain number of raw materials, parts, components and finished products duty free.

In this proposal the Commission is proposing the adopting of a Regulation which will establish that from 1st January 2010 until 31st December 2019 the Common Customs Tariff duties applicable to imports into the autonomous regions of Madeira and the Azores of:

- finished goods for agricultural, commercial or industrial use (those listed in Annex I of the draft Regulation); and
- raw materials, parts and components listed in Annex II of the draft Regulation, and used for agricultural purposes, and industrial transformation or maintenance

be suspended in full.

¹ Madeira and the Azores belong to the outer most regions of the Community for which special measures may be foreseen in accordance with Article 299 (2) of the EC Treaty in order to overcome the economic disadvantages these areas suffer due to their geographical situation.



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In order to ensure that only economic operators located on the territory of Madeira and the Azores benefit from these tariff measures, the suspensions should be made conditional on the end use of the products in accordance with Council Regulation (EEC) 2913/92 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 2454/93 of 2 July. This should avoid any misuse or change in traditional trade flows of these goods. Therefore, finished goods will have to be used by local companies on the islands for a period of at least two years before they could be sold freely to other companies located in the other part of the customs territory of the European Community. Raw materials, parts and components will have to be used for agricultural purposes, and industrial transformation and maintenance in the autonomous regions in order to benefit from the duty suspension.

Consumers: EU crackdown on websites selling consumer electronic goods

EU Consumer Commissioner Meglena Kuneva today announced the results of an EU-wide investigation - involving 26 Member States and Norway and Iceland - into misleading advertising and unfair practices on websites selling consumer electronic goods. The clampdown covered 369 websites selling six of the most popular electronic goods to consumers in the EU - digital cameras, mobile phones, personal music players, DVD players, computer equipment and game consoles. It covered 200 of the biggest websites selling electronic equipment in the EU as well as more than 100 websites which were targeted on the basis of consumer complaints. The results of the checks carried out in May this year show that 55% of the websites investigated showed irregularities in particular relating to: misleading information about consumer rights; misleading information about the total cost of the product; or incomplete contact details for the trader. The initial checks by national authorities will now be followed by an enforcement phase when companies are contacted by national authorities and required to correct their websites or clarify their position.

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