



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

## COMPETITIVENESS AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Sectoral Committee  
Weekly Update  
**07.05.10**

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**COM (2010) 176 - Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION laying down rules for imports into the European Union from Greenland of fishery products, live bivalve molluscs, echinoderms, tunicates, marine gastropods and by-products thereof**

Greenland and the European Union intend to enter into a sanitary arrangement on fish, fishery products, bivalve molluscs, tunicates and echinoderms (live and not alive) for human consumption as well as by-products derived from these sources, including fish meal or fish oil. The objective of such an arrangement would be that Greenland can trade these commodities with the Union on the basis of internal market rules, provided that Greenland transposes EU sanitary and, where appropriate, animal health rules on fishery products, live bivalve molluscs and by-products derived from these sources.

This proposal lays down all the rules necessary for such an arrangement.

The proposal is accompanied by a political statement expressed through a joint declaration by the European Union, Greenland and Denmark to further strengthen the relationship and cooperation between the EU and Greenland, based on broadly shared interests, to the mutual benefit of trade and to endow their mutual relations with a long term perspective. Denmark was involved because the inspections were held by The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (DVFA), through its Regional Veterinary and Food Control Authority in Greenland. It has been responsible for the effective implementation of the relevant EU sanitary and animal health legislation for the products concerned. The DVFA has provided official assurances that Greenland does comply with the rules of the relevant EU provisions, including import controls.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0176:FIN:EN:PDF>



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### **COM (2010) 187 - COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS SIMPLIFYING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMMES**

Research and innovation are at the core of the Commission's initiative "Europe 2020 - a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth". Following the endorsement by the Spring European Council of the main elements of the strategy, concrete steps are now being undertaken to flesh out the Europe 2020 flagship initiatives. A "European plan for research and innovation", the "Innovation Union" flagship, will set out priorities and directions to improve framework conditions for Europe's research and its capacities for creativity and innovation. To act on this a partnership better than ever is needed in view of the fierce global race for knowledge and its translation into innovative products, processes and services that create jobs and fuel growth.

This Communication assesses where we stand on issues that concern Europe's current major public funding initiative for research and technological development, the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). A lot has been and is being done in terms of simplification following discussions in Council and Parliament.

This Communication also provides possible directions for more radical simplification. It gives directions which could subsequently be translated into concrete actions, either under the current framework or in the form of new legislative proposals. Some of these directions however would require a new political balance concerning trust and accountability and could in all likelihood also be extended to other European funding actions in the areas of research and innovation, such as the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT).

Further simplification can only be achieved with the full commitment and political support of the other EU institutions. The Commission calls on the other EU institutions to contribute to the debate and give feedback on the options outlined in this Communication, in view of the future shaping of EU research funding. The results of this debate will be introduced in the Commission proposals for the "Innovation Union" flagship initiative under the Europe 2020 strategy and into the shaping of the next framework programmes.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0187:FIN:EN:PDF>



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### **COM (2010) 201 - Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION (EU) No .../... of amending Regulation (EU) No 7/2010 opening and providing for the management of autonomous tariff quotas of the Union for certain agricultural and industrial products**

Autonomous tariff quotas of the Union are needed for products where production in the Union is insufficient to meet the needs of the user industry in the Union for the current quota period. In response to requests from several Member States, the Commission, together with the government experts concerned, considered whether it is necessary to open autonomous tariff quotas for certain agricultural and industrial products.

On 22 December 2009 the Council adopted Regulation (EU) No 7/2010 opening and providing for the management of autonomous tariff quotas of the Union for certain agricultural and industrial products so that Union demand for the products in question could be met under the most favourable conditions.

Tariff quotas of the Union should be opened at zero or reduced rates of the autonomous Common Customs Tariff duty for appropriate volumes, without disturbing the markets for such products. Discussions at meetings of the Economic Tariff Questions Group showed that Member States were ready to open a new quota and to increase quota volumes for the products covered by the proposal for a Regulation. The proposal is in line with agricultural, trade, enterprise, development and external relations policies. This proposal is not at the expense of countries enjoying a preferential trading agreement with the EU.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0201:FIN:EN:PDF>



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### **Antitrust: Vice President Almunia welcomes Visa Europe's proposal to cut interbank fees for debit cards**

European Competition Commissioner Joaquín Almunia welcomed proposed commitments by Visa Europe to significantly cut its multilateral interchange fees (MIFs) for debit card payments. The MIF is a bank-to-bank fee collectively fixed by Visa Europe's member banks for card payments that is ultimately paid by consumers. In 2009, the Commission communicated its preliminary view to Visa that its MIFs restricted competition between the banks of the merchants.

Commissioner Almunia stated that "Visa Europe's willingness to reduce multilateral interchange fees and to make its rules more transparent ... will improve the efficiency of the European financial system to the benefit of consumers and retailers". The countries that would benefit from the domestic MIF reduction are those European Economic Area countries where the MIFs are currently set by Visa Europe, namely Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Sweden, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/462&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>