



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

## COMPETITIVENESS AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Sectoral Committee  
Weekly Update  
**26.02.10**

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## **Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee**

### **COM(2010)54 - Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1215/2009 introducing exceptional trade measures for countries and territories participating in or linked to the European Union's Stabilisation and Association process**

Council Regulation (EC) No 1215/2009 grants exceptional unlimited duty-free access to the EU market for nearly all products originating in the countries and territories benefiting from the Stabilisation and Association process. The key aim of these measures is to revitalise the Western Balkan economies through a privileged access to the EU market. In turn, economic development is to foster political stability in the entire region.

These trade preferences were granted for a period ending on 31 December 2010 and currently apply to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo for all the products under the scope of the Regulation. The products originating in Albania, in the Republic of Croatia, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or in Montenegro continue to benefit from the provisions of the Regulation when so indicated or from any measures provided in the Regulation which are more favourable than the trade concessions provided for in the framework of bilateral agreements between the EU and these countries.

This proposal amends certain elements of Regulation (EC) No 1215/2009 to permit the extension of its validity to 31 December 2015 and make certain adjustments consequent to the entry into force of bilateral agreements with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. The amendments in the proposal take into consideration the changes in respect to the products coverage. In order not to disrupt trade, this proposed Regulation has to be adopted and published in the Official Journal of the EU before 31 December 2010.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0054:FIN:EN:PDF>

## **Council Meeting on competitiveness**

A Council meeting on competitiveness will be held, in Brussels, on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> March. Ministers will hold an exchange of views concerning the future European strategy for growth and jobs in preparation of the European Council meeting on 25 and 26 March.

Concerning internal market and industry policy issues, the Council is expected to adopt a resolution on enhancing the enforcement of intellectual property rights in the internal market. Furthermore, the Council will adopt conclusions on the evaluation of the mechanisms and structures of the European Research Council, and the European researchers' mobility and careers. The Council will hold an exchange of views on the need for a new industrial policy, and will adopt a resolution on developments in the governance of the European Research Area.

Read more:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/10/50&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>



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## **Antitrust: Commission investigates suspected cartel in the sector of automotive electrical and electronic components suppliers**

Starting on 24 February 2010 Commission officials carried out unannounced inspections in several Member States at the premises of companies active in the sector of automotive electrical distribution systems (sometimes referred to as wiring harnesses) and of other components for automotive electronic and electrical distribution systems. The Commission has reason to believe that the companies concerned may have violated EU antitrust rules that prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices (Article 101 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union – TFEU and Article 53 of the Agreement on the European Economic Area). The Commission's investigation is being coordinated with several other competition authorities worldwide

Surprise inspections are a preliminary step into suspected anticompetitive practices. The fact that the European Commission carries out such inspections does not mean that the companies are guilty of anti-competitive behaviour nor does it prejudice the outcome of the investigation itself.

Read more:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/10/49&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

## **EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht travels to Asia**

EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht will make a key visit to Asia from the 1<sup>st</sup> till the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2010. The visit to Vietnam, Singapore and India underlines the importance the European Commission places on pursuing new exporting opportunities in the dynamic emerging Asian markets. In Vietnam, Commissioner De Gucht will hold talks on how to further strengthen EU-Vietnam trade relations; in Singapore he will launch negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA); and in India the Commissioner is aiming to inject new momentum into the ongoing FTA negotiations.

Read more:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/193&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

### **MEUSAC's Core Group Meeting**

The main item on the agenda for today's meeting was the 'EU 2020' Strategy. A press release on the discussion can be found in the DOI website:

[http://www.doi.gov.mt/EN/press\\_releases/2010/02/26.asp](http://www.doi.gov.mt/EN/press_releases/2010/02/26.asp)