



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

COMPETITIVENESS AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Sectoral Committee
Weekly Update
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COMMISSION:

COM(2010) 2020 – Communication from the Commission: Europe 2020 A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

In November the Commission launched a consultation on the EU 2020 strategy, the successor to the Lisbon Strategy. The Commission has now adopted this Communication which will be addressed by the Spring European Council on the 25th and 26th of this month. The Communication puts forward three mutually reinforcing priorities:

- Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation.
- Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy.
- Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

The strategy proposes the following targets:

- 75 % of the population aged 20-64 should be employed.
- 3% of the EU's GDP should be invested in R&D.
- The "20/20/20" climate/energy targets should be met (including an increase to 30% of emissions reduction if the conditions are right).
- The share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree.
- 20 million less people should be at risk of poverty.

To ensure that each Member State tailors the Europe 2020 strategy to its particular situation, the Commission proposes that EU goals are translated into national targets and trajectories. The targets are not exhaustive: a wide range of actions at national, EU and international levels will be necessary to underpin them. The Commission has put forward seven flagship initiatives to catalyse progress under each priority theme. These are: Innovation Union; Youth on the move; A digital agenda for Europe; Resource efficient Europe; An industrial policy for the globalisation era; An agenda for new skills and jobs; and European platform against poverty.

The European Council will have full ownership and be the focal point of the new strategy; whilst the Commission will monitor progress towards the targets, facilitate policy exchange and make the necessary proposals to steer action and advance the EU flagship initiatives.

This strategy should be endorsed by the European Council during its meeting in Spring; whilst the detailed parameters of the strategy, including the integrated guidelines and national targets are to be presented, and adopted at the June European Council.

<http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>



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COM(2010) 48 - Proposal for a Council Regulation: amending Council Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1202/2009 of 7 December 2009 imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty on imports of furfuryl alcohol originating in the People's Republic of China following a 'new exporter' review pursuant to Article 11(4) of Regulation (EC) No 1225/2009

In June 2009, the Commission initiated a 'new exporter' review of Regulation (EC) 1905/2003 imposing definitive anti-dumping measures on imports of furfuryl alcohol originating in China. This review was conducted for Henan Hongye Chemical Company Ltd and its related companies Puyang Hongjian Resin Science & Technology Development Company Ltd and Puyang Hongye Imp. & Exp. Commerce Company Ltd (the applicant).

This proposal is based on the definitive findings on dumping which showed that market economy treatment (MET) should be granted to the applicant and that the applicant was found to be dumping. The anti-dumping duty on imports of furfuryl alcohol from the applicant is therefore established at EUR 142 per ton, corresponding to a dumping margin of 14.87%.

Internal Market Scoreboard: transposition and implementation of the internal market rules by the Member States

The European Commission's latest Internal Market Scoreboard indicates that Member States have performed very well in transposing internal market rules into national law on time, but still need to improve the way those rules are applied in practice.

On average 0.7% of Internal Market Directives for which the implementation deadline has passed are not currently written into national law. This means that Member States are well below the 1.0% target agreed by Heads of State. Malta and Lithuania are overall the best performers, being three Directives away from a perfect score. This is the third time that Malta has been in first position.

Regarding the application of EU law, there has been a slight reduction in the number of infringement cases, but the duration of the proceedings remains too long and Member States take on average 18 months to comply with Court of Justice rulings despite the legal obligation to take immediate action. The areas of "taxation and custom union" and "environment" remain the biggest sources of infringements.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/211&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>



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Consumer Protection: mobile phone customers entitled to protection from data-roaming "bill shock"

As from 1st March 2010, European mobile phone operators are obliged under EU roaming rules to offer their customers a cut-off limit facility to protect them from 'bill shocks' for surfing the Internet with their mobile phones and laptops while travelling in other EU countries.

Mobile phone operators are obliged to offer their customers from 1st March 2010 a monthly cut-off limit of €50 or any other limit which the customers opt for. Customers will receive a warning when they hit 80% of the chosen limit. Until 1 July 2010, customers need to make a deliberate choice in order to benefit from a cut-off limit. But, customers who do not make a choice by 1 July 2010 will have the cut-off limit set at €50 by default as from that date.

The cut-off limit available from 1st March 2010 will guarantee more transparency and protection for consumers, and it will ensure that they will no longer face bill shocks for using data roaming services, such as that faced by a German traveller in 2009 who, after downloading a TV programme while roaming in France, faced a bill of no less than €46 000.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/215&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

COUNCIL:

Council Meeting on competitiveness: Main results

The Council adopted conclusions on industrial policy, following a debate on key objectives for establishing the principles to a **new industrial policy** with a continuing focus on sustainable growth and employment.

In preparation to the next Spring European Council, ministers for competitiveness held an exchange of views on the future **strategy for the creation of growth and jobs**.

The Council adopted a resolution aimed at enhancing the enforcement of **intellectual property rights** in the internal market, and adopted a decision introducing restrictive measures against Eritrea. It also adopted its position at first reading on a draft regulation on **trade in timber**.

Read more:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/intm/113105.pdf



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COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EU:

Commission v France, Commission v Austria and Commission v Ireland

Cases C-197/08, C-198/08 and C-221/08

The Commission brought infringement actions before the Court of Justice against France, Austria and Ireland, because it considered that **the legislation of those Member States concerning the fixing of minimum prices for some manufactured tobacco products are contrary to Directive 95/59¹** which lays down rules on excise duty affecting the consumption of those products. According to the Commission, the legislation of those three Member States, which imposes minimum prices corresponding to a certain percentage of the average prices of the manufactured tobacco concerned undermines the freedom of manufacturers and importers to determine the maximum retail selling prices of their products and, correspondingly, free competition. That legislation is therefore contrary to the directive.

The Court upheld the Commission's request and held that the legislation in France, Austria and Ireland fixing minimum retail prices for cigarettes infringes European Union law. It held that a system of minimum retail selling prices for tobacco products cannot be regarded as compatible with Article 9(1) of Directive 95/59 unless it is structured in such a way as to ensure, in any event, that the competitive advantage which could result for some manufacturers and importers of those products from lower cost prices is not impaired.

<http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2010-03/cp100021en.pdf>

¹ Council Directive 95/59/EC of 27 November 1995 on taxes other than turnover taxes which affect the consumption of manufactured tobacco (OJ 1995 L 291, p. 40), as amended by Council Directive 2002/10/EC of 12 February 2002 (OJ 2002 L 46, p. 26).