
PRESS RELEASE

Public Consultation on the Internal Market for Goods: a cornerstone of Europe's competitiveness

Facilitating the marketing of products in the EU, while maintaining a high level of safety and quality

The European Commission has proposed various measures to ensure a smoother functioning of the internal market for goods in the context of the ongoing review of the Single Market of the 21st Century, notably the laying down of procedures on the application of national technical rules on products lawfully marketed in another Member State, the regulation on accreditation and market surveillance and the proposal for a decision on a common legal framework for industrial products. The three proposals by the Commission should facilitate the marketing of products in the EU, while at the same time maintaining a high level of safety and quality.

Forum Malta fl-Ewropa
280, 3rd Floor
Republic Street
Valletta VLT 04
Malta
Tel: (+356) 2590 9101
Fax: (+356) 2122 7580
Email: foruminfo@gov.mt

It is in this context that *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa* and the Malta Standards Authority held an Information and Consultation Seminar on 27 March to debate on issues relating to the marketing of goods given the widespread effect these proposals have on manufacturers, importers and ultimately consumers.

In his opening address, the Minister for Competitiveness and Communications, Hon. Censu Galea, said that Government is committed to find ways and means on how to augment the free movement of goods for Maltese entrepreneurs. Minister Galea welcomed the initiative of *Forum Malta fl-Ewropa* and the Malta Standards Authority and encouraged stakeholders to register their views and ideas on the application of such measures, because, other consultations “have revealed that there are a number of outstanding weaknesses in the internal market for goods, which need to be addressed so as to ensure a more positive effect to both businesses and consumers.” Mr Galea reiterated that Malta will leave its inefaceable mark at an EU level on the Commission’s proposals being put forth particularly in the light of the positive results attained by our country following discussions at EU level on the Pyrotechnics and the REACH proposals.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Michael Frendo, in his intervention questioned whether Member states are aware of the directives to ensue following the adoption of these proposals. Minister Frendo insisted on adopting a holistic approach to the issues being tackled, ensuring that the said proposals also lead to a technology friendly environment. Minister Frendo insisted on the need to retain the market’s competitiveness enabling companies to compete under fair conditions while maintaining stable costs of production. Hon. Frendo highlighted the need to



Forum Malta fl-Ewropa
280, 3rd Floor
Republic Street
Valletta VLT 04
Malta
Tel: (+356) 2590 9101
Fax: (+356) 2122 7580
Email: foruminfo@gov.mt

have third countries producing goods for the consumption of the EU's internal market attest to the same standards laid down by certification of conformity to EU based manufacturers.

In his reply to Minister Frendo's intervention, MSA Acting Chief Executive Officer, Ing. Anthony Camilleri, insisted that the proposals together aim to improve the free movement within the EU of diverse goods, ranging from toys to medical equipment, by streamlining existing mechanisms for the circulation of safe goods. Ing. Camilleri reiterated that the Commission's proposals endeavour is to move towards a technology friendly environment. On increased costs, Ing. Camilleri claimed that, yes there will be increased costs when these proposals are finally applied by member states however these added burdens will not be endured by the manufacturing industry itself but by the governing body. The producer will continue to be responsible for product safety but not for market surveillance tests which will have to be carried out by accredited laboratories. The Commission's proposal on accreditation and market surveillance is being contended by MSA officials in that MSA is advocating for conformity tests certifying product safety of goods before these are introduced on the market. Products coming from third countries, that is those being imported into an EU member state for the first time, are no exception to EU standards regulations.

MSA officials, Ing Linda-Jean Worley and Ing. Joseph Micallef further expanded on the Commission's proposals. Ing. Worley outlined issues relating to improved confidence in conformity assessment bodies and the accreditation process including the calibration, testing and inspection of goods as well as the certification of quality, environmental management systems,

Forum Malta fl-Ewropa
280, 3rd Floor
Republic Street
Valletta VLT 04
Malta
Tel: (+356) 2590 9101
Fax: (+356) 2122 7580
Email: foruminfo@gov.mt

certification of products and persons, while highlighting the obligations on Member States to organise market surveillance, take appropriate measures to ensure compliance with the legislation, exchange information on measures taken as well as enhancing cooperation between Member States and the Commission. A detailed presentation by Ing. Micallef on the implementation of a procedure for mutual recognition for products that fall outside the EU's harmonised area (the EU's internal market) followed. Ing. Camilleri explained that the scope of the proposal is to harmonise EU legislation, enabling goods that currently do not benefit from the right of free circulation on the market to do so.

The Commission's proposals are set to have all Member States in line with safety regulations and standardisation of goods. Malta, prior to accession to the European Union, signed an MOU, which has set it in line with most of the regulations being proposed.

FME – 28.03.2007