Statistics on the trading of goods between Member States, Intrastat: common framework

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PURPOSE : to establish a common framework for the systematic production of Community statistics on the trading of goods between Member States. CONTENT : to recall, the system of collecting statistics on the trading of goods between Member States, known as the Intranet system, was introduced by Council Regulation 3330/91/EC and has been applicable since 1993, when the single market was completed and the physical frontiers between Member States were removed. This system has been simplified on two occasions. This proposal, which aims to replace the regulations in force as from 2005, forms part of these efforts to improve and adapt the statistical system in order to take better account of both users' needs and the burden on information providers. The main characteristics of the new Regulation are as follows: - the contents of the basic regulation have been defined and drafted with the aim of making the rules clearer and simpler - and thus easily understood by non-specialists - but still precise so as to avoid any confusion when applying them and defining implementation measures; - the scope of the new regulation is defined more clearly, being strictly limited to Community statistics with the Member States remaining free to compile more detailed national statistics to meet national needs; - in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the new regulation gives the Member States more freedom to organise how the data are collected, and makes it possible to take greater account of the specific administrative set-up in each Member State; - the content of the data to be collected, which had already been adapted under the SLIM initiative, remains unchanged; it has been validated following analysis of the results of three studies (an opinion poll of information providers in six Member States, a sample study of users of Community statistics, a study on problems with the product nomenclature in Sweden); - the system of thresholds has been retained, in a simplified form, in order to provide a satisfactory response to users' needs whilst reducing the burden of response on the parties responsible for providing statistical information, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises; - the new regulation now includes provisions on deadlines for the transmission of data and coverage of the entire trade sector which aim to respond in a more appropriate manner to requirements for the purposes of macroeconomic and short-term policy, particularly those expressed by the European Central Bank; - a link has been retained between the system for collecting statistical information and the fiscal formalities which exist in the context of trade in goods between Member States; this link makes it possible, in particular, to check the quality of the information collected; - provisions have been introduced which relate to the quality of the statistical information; these deal in particular with evaluating the quality of the data using common indicators and regular reports to ensure transparency in this field; - the dispositions regarding confidentiality foresee that data are not disseminated or are hidden at the request of the information providers, in order to take into account the burden caused by the treatment of confidential data by national bodiesand in order to guarantee the relevance of data at detailed level ventilated by product; these provisions are in line with those in force in the framework of Extrastat. - in accordance with Council Decision 1999/468/EC of 28 June 1999 laying down the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission, the committee set up to assist the Commission in implementing the new regulation is a regulatory committee, whereas the existing committee is a management committee.