Internal market: 3rd 2002 review.

2002/2143(COS) - 14/05/2002 - Document attached to the procedure

The European Commission has presented the internal market scoreboard (May 2002). The document is about performance and results. It measures progress, or lack of progress, on three fronts. First, it studies how well Member States are implementing Internal Market legislation. Here there has been an improvement in most Member States' records concerning the timely transposition of Internal Market law and in a few cases a very marked improvement, but 8 Member States are still struggling to meet the European Council's target of a 1.5% transposition deficit. Member States will now need to work even harder to meet the additional zero tolerance target set by the Barcelona European Council for directives more than two years overdue. Member States must also begin to reduce seriously the number of infringements for which they are responsible. Second, the Scoreboard looks at remaining technical barriers and progress made to plug outstanding gaps in the legislative framework. Remaining barriers must be removed if the EU is to exploit the Internal Market's full potential. Success is a prerequisite for the Union to become the strongest economy in the world by 2010. The realisation of an Internal Market without tax obstacles is a key priority for the Commission. Without decisive action to remove these obstacles, the EU will not become the most competitive economy. The next Scoreboard will highlight the nature and impact of obstacles and will outline the Commission's strategy to remove them. The Barcelona European Council called on the Commission to highlight technical barriers to trade in this Scoreboard. While there are no readily available data which would allow us to identify clearly the significance of technical barriers for each Member State and compare their performance, the Commission has made a first attempt to describe the situation in certain product sectors including the real impact of remaining barriers to trade. The primary conclusion is that, for some industry sectors a new approach may be needed, as current arrangements seem to have reached the limits of their effectiveness. Third, the Scoreboard revisits the question of prices. While the Scoreboard traditionally examines inputs (e.g. directives adopted and transposed, infringements), what matters most is practical results. The Internal Market must deliver tangible benefits, enhancing opportunities and well-being for both citizens and businesses. Price convergence is an important indicator of the Internal Market's functioning. The Commission intends to publish regularly price information to promote transparency and raise awareness: this edition of the Scoreboard reports on the results of a price survey for common groceries which suggest that there is considerable scope for further price convergence - i.e. lower prices.