



EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION EUROPEENNE DE LIBRE-ECHANGE

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EEA EFTA COMMENTS TO THE NEW INTERNAL MARKET STRATEGY

1. The EEA EFTA States are pleased to present suggestions for a new Internal Market Strategy, which will run from 2003 to 2006. After extensive reform initiatives, and as the Lisbon Strategy enters into the middle phase of its 10 year span, a new strategy that identifies and tackles remaining challenges at the core of the Internal Market will provide a very strong boost to European competitiveness.

Transposition

2. Timely implementation of legislation throughout the EEA is fundamental to the functioning of the internal market.
- The EEA EFTA States propose, at minimum, a renewal of the transposition target of 100 percent in the case of directives whose implementation is more than two years overdue.

Mutual Recognition

3. Mutual recognition is at the heart of the Internal Market, and the EEA EFTA States recognise the need for a broad Community approach to reinforce this principle. This includes administrative cooperation (including market surveillance, problem solving etc.) and a revised European certification policy. Every effort should be made to develop new initiatives based on the review of the New Approach undertaken by the Commission. The EEA EFTA States wish to see more use of European-wide product marking systems and not least CE marking.
- The EEA EFTA States propose a comprehensive evaluation of the demand for voluntary certification marks, which have a potential for fragmenting the Internal Market.

Better Regulation

4. The Better Regulation Action Plan is important for the EEA EFTA States.
- When drafting new legislation, we advocate *thinking small first* instead of relying on exemptions for SMEs; most businesses in the EEA are SMEs.
 - The results of the Business Test Panels should be considered when amending proposals for new legislation that will affect the business environment.

The programme to update and simplify the Community acquis is essential for the small business sector. Simplification and consolidation are very effective tools to make legislation more coherent, understandable and less voluminous. This is an important first step towards more user-friendly and accessible legislation.

- Indicators should be further developed to ensure that this effort reduces unnecessary bureaucratic burdens for businesses and citizens.

Cross Border Provision of Services

5. It is vital to remove both legislative and non-legislative barriers to the cross-border provision and consumption of services, in order to improve the practical working of the Internal Market. Service providers should be enabled to operate as easily throughout the Internal Market as they can in any single State.

- Indicators need to be further developed which measure the comparative burden of providing services within single EEA States, compared with cross-border service provision throughout the Internal Market.

Problem Solving

6. The EEA EFTA States underline the importance of the creation and promotion of networks that are designed to enhance the performance of the Internal Market. These networks become even more important with the imminent enlargement. The Euro Info Centres can play a vital role in transition of the accession countries into effective participation in the Internal Market.

- SOLVIT needs to be promoted and unresolved cases should be studied with the view to take action to improve the function of the Internal Market for citizens and businesses.
- Dialogue with Citizens and other initiatives designed to promote free movement of people should be strengthened.