



'shareholders in policy'

Stakeholders are gaining more and more importance in policy making. The definition of the word stakeholders used to be: 'A person holding the stakes of people placing bets,' with the responsibility of delivering the pot to the winner of the bet¹. The meaning of stakeholders has evolved; we now refer to a stakeholder when we talk about a person or organization with a legitimate interest in a given situation, action or enterprise. This change in the meaning of the word 'stakeholder' reflects its growing importance in policy making on national and European levels. Stakeholders have become like 'shareholders' in policy making. Likewise, there are many constituencies who have a 'stake' in Single Market policy – those who benefit from the opportunities of the Single Market, just as much as those who have some concerns. To encourage a wider stakeholder input, DG MARKT has developed its new multi-stakeholder initiative, while continuing its tradition of consulting specific groups of stakeholders for specific policy areas.

DG MARKT's new stakeholder group: the Single Market Informal Dialogue Group

DG MARKT has recently launched a new Stakeholder initiative. Prompted and inspired by the Single Market Review² and President Barroso's Political Guidelines³, in which more transparency was identified as a key-element for furthering the completion of the Single Market, DG MARKT has invited both traditional and non traditional stakeholders, including consumer groups, trade unions, business representatives (including SMEs), NGO representatives in social and environmental fields, and regional representatives to discuss general Single Market Issues. With this new initiative, the DG is building on a strong tradition of consulting stakeholder groups on specific policy areas.

The group is to meet approximately four times a year; its first meeting took place in January of this year. Participants agreed to focus on the process of how DG MARKT engages stakeholders in consultations. Many represent large organisations with capillary structures all over Europe, who when informed in time, could give valuable feedback on consultations for policy initiatives. Being briefed on processes at regular intervals also complies with the wish of many organisations to be involved earlier on in the policy cycle, so that views can be taken into account at the design stage of policy formation processes.

But not only processes will be discussed; broad themes of substance related to the Single Market will also be put on the agenda. A first brainstorming on possible fields of interest yielded subjects such as the relaunch of the Single Market, public procurement, services of general interest and access to (financial) services.



DG MARKT's Single Market Informal Dialogue Group meets Professor Mario Monti

¹ Wikipedia

² The Single Market Review (2007) called for better and earlier involvement of a wider range of stakeholders.

³ 3 September 2009