

## **Concluding remarks for the Public Hearing on Future Single Market Policy**

**Mr Thierry Stoll, Acting Director General of DG Internal Market**

- Thank you very much for your active participation in this public hearing. From my point of view the hearing was a great success, and I think the lively debate we had on the future of the Single Market underlines that view.
- Unfortunately there was not enough time to answer all the questions raised. At the same time, it was comforting to have such a lively discussion illustrating the relevance of the Single Market to our citizens. Please do not hesitate to send any further questions and comments to our functional mailbox and we will ensure an appropriate follow-up.
- We will prepare a report of today's event which will summarise the panel discussions. It will be available on DG Internal Market's website. You will also find there the opening speech of Commissioner McCreevy and some of the statements delivered during the hearing.
- The Services Directive, which was mentioned several times, is relevant to all the topics discussed today: informing citizens, tools and implementation. This experience will contribute to our debate on how to develop the Single Market.
- I will not try to summarise every detail we have heard today. But here are some important messages I take away from this hearing:
- **We need to reach out better to our stakeholders.** Three elements are crucial here: improving the way we consult; ensuring more compliance with our rules; and ensuring that our rules address the concerns of all. There is something wrong with the Single Market if its citizens are disenchanted with it.

- We received very useful suggestions on consultations, which should help us to make them more accessible and user-friendly. I retain in particular the advice to come up with uniform consultation practices within the Commission and getting the help of our delegations in Member States. We are also told to provide more feedback on what we do, or do not do, with the results. And we are advised to get in earlier with all interests concerned, for instance through ensuring a better coordination between Commission DGs.
- The second panel focused **on the way we shape our policies. In order to be effective, we need to be smart about the tools we use.** In order to avoid an abstract and general discussion on tools, we have chosen the concrete example of the retail financial services sector. I believe the lessons learnt there also apply to other policy areas.
- So what are the tools we should use? First, we need to start from a clear evidence base. Then, when we detect barriers and shortcomings, we have to use appropriate tools to overcome them. Regulation is one tool, but often the best result is reached through a mix of tools: this also includes self- and co-regulation, competition advocacy and guidance. In addition, we must step up efforts to put in place effective supervisory mechanisms. In a larger and more mature Single Market compliance is of key importance.
- The third panel focused on **making what we have function better on the ground.** Again an important matter: as one panellist pointed out, we must ensure that citizens can use their rights, and feel the direct benefits from the Single Market.
- The main message I take away here is the need to act both ex ante and ex post, i.e., to prevent problems from arising and to solve them when they do arise. Tackling both sides is important. That means we have to think harder about implementation. For

instance, to make sure that the ‘single points of contact’ required by the Service Directive become an effective reality.

- As regards problem solving, I am happy to see much support for SOLVIT, which we are keen to develop further. But I also agree with panellists that national courts play a crucial role in building the Single Market – so that is a potential we must also further build on.
- **Last but not least: communication.** As we heard today, we are in a communication business. And we, as DG Markt, do not necessarily appear first of class here. We must learn how to address the public opinion at large, not just the ‘Brussels village’ – and that means explaining in clear and concrete terms what we are doing and why it is beneficial, and support this by practical examples and telling figures.
- Let me conclude by **thanking** all of you for participating so actively in the debate. Special thanks go to the panellists, and to the chairs, who had the ungrateful task to remind all of us that time flies faster than we would wish, to the interpreters and to my colleagues in DG MARKT who did an excellent job in preparing and running this conference.