Citizens' summary

New EU competition rules for co-operation between competitors

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

- Competing companies often work together, for instance in:
  - research and development
  - production
  - purchasing
  - product standardisation
  - information exchange
- This can be beneficial for consumers and lead to lower prices, more choice and better products.
- However, there is also a risk that exactly the opposite will happen so that consumers will be worse off.

WHY DOES ACTION HAVE TO BE TAKEN BY THE EU?

- The EU is responsible for ensuring EU competition rules are applied in the same way in all EU countries.

WHAT EXACTLY WILL CHANGE?

The new EU rules will:

- be much more detailed, user-friendly and clear
- explain exactly when an exchange of information is good or bad for competition
- provide better guidance for standard-setting organisations.

WHO WILL BENEFIT AND HOW?

- Companies will benefit from better guidance on what kinds of co-operation are allowed.
- Consumers will benefit because the new rules will help prevent co-operation that would lead to higher prices, less choice or less innovation.

WHEN WILL THE RULES COME INTO EFFECT?

- December 2010.