



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 19.12.2011
C/2011/9668 final

Dear President,

The Commission welcomes the interest of the Bundesrat in the Communication "Better governance of the Single Market through greater administrative cooperation: A strategy for expanding and developing the Internal Market Information System (IMI)" {COM(2011) 75 final} and is grateful for the submission of its opinion on the Communication. Allow me to apologise for the extremely long delay in replying to your opinion.

The Commission particularly welcomes the overall support expressed by the Bundesrat for its plans for future expansion of IMI to new areas of internal market law. At the same time, it has also taken careful note of the concerns raised in the Bundestag's opinion. Any such expansion of IMI will of course be prepared thoroughly in the relevant working groups and will be accompanied by appropriate awareness-raising efforts and training of prospective users. In this context it is worth noting that already today IMI is used successfully at all levels of administration, including municipalities, in particular to support information exchanges pursuant to the Services Directive 2006/123/EC.

In order to improve the user-friendliness of the system, the Commission regularly consults the national IMI coordinators and IMI users to identify required improvements. On this basis, improved search facilities were made available earlier this year and a further release of IMI is planned for the first half of 2012. Whilst we fully recognise the importance of machine translation, the need to protect personal data has meant that readily available external services could not be implemented in IMI. The Commission can assure you that its services are fully committed to providing a secure machine translation service in the shortest possible time.

IMI has been conceived as a flexible tool to support various areas of internal market law where information exchange is required between public authorities to ensure appropriate application of EU law, including, where appropriate, the handling of notifications. While it is not the intent of the Commission to open IMI for use by private citizens and businesses, there may be a need for a technical means of interaction allowing for efficient information supply and retrieval between authorities and the public in certain administrative areas.

As far as the security of personal data processed in IMI is concerned, the Commission services maintain regular contacts with the office of the European Data Protection

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Supervisor to ensure full compliance with the applicable rules and requirements of Regulation (EC) No 45/2001.

On 29 August 2011 the Commission adopted a proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on administrative cooperation through the Internal Market Information System (the "IMI Regulation") {COM(2011) 522 final – 2011/0226 (COD)} that will provide a solid legal framework for the functioning of IMI. The Commission will work in partnership with the European Parliament and Council in order to allow the system to realise its full potential in contributing to better implementation of internal market law.

I am looking forward to further developing our policy dialogue.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*