On 14 March, the Single Market Enforcement Taskforce (SMET) met for its first physical meeting in Brussels since COVID-19. The meeting was chaired by the Director General of DG GROW Kerstin Jorna, and Ambassador Daniel Bockert from the Swedish Presidency of the European Council.

The first part focused on the state of play of current projects. Kerstin emphasised that SMET needs to walk the talk and make more progress on removing barriers to projects like:

- administrative requirements for cross-border service providers
- streamlining permitting procedures for renewable energy projects
- two professional qualifications projects

With 41.3% of the initially listed prior checks removed, the project on prior checks for professionals is close to its objective of 50%. It was agreed to go for one last push to reach that goal. SMET members also briefly discussed the need for more transparency on its work and the results achieved.

Challenges

Representatives of EU countries shared their experience on the internal challenges they face when trying to remove single market barriers. Some solutions were presented by Austria, Italy and Germany. The main message was the need for more political backing and visibility through the Competitiveness Council (COMPET). It is important that ministers are briefed on progress on removing barriers, but they should also decide on which other barriers they wish to remove. Ideally, this would be agreed during the COMPET Council in March.

Stakeholders presented permitting barriers they encounter in practice and proposed some solutions. EDP Renewables, Iberdrola and Lightsource BP detailed their experience with permitting for renewable energy projects. This included lengthy deployment processes (up to 7 years), the need to contact up to 30 authorities, burdensome procedures, a lack of clear deadlines to expect answering from various authorities, and unclear spatial planning requirements.

The solutions they suggested were in line with those discussed earlier:

- a one-stop shop
- digitalisation
• positive silence
• staffing
• training
Siemens Gamesa and Bay Wa.re. then presented skills challenges in this sector and the need to **support the mobility of workers and specialists** within the EU. The meeting concluded with a discussion on the way forward. EU countries put forward several proposals, mainly in the areas of
• packaging and labelling requirements
• digitalisation (in line with the sustainable development goals)
• mutual recognition
• translation requirements
Denmark also proposed a project on the approval process of BioSolutions. This would involve adopting fast-track approval procedures for innovative, low-risk biological and sustainability-enabling pesticides.

**Steering for the future**
Kerstin invited stakeholders to provide a list of the most important professions by April, which will serve as a basis for further actions to facilitate availability and skills mobility in these jobs. SMET members are invited to analyse how the proposals discussed with the stakeholders can **further support progress** on the objectives outlined in the [Single Market at 30](#) and [Competitiveness communications](#). These documents are also a good basis for reflecting on **which priorities should be on SMET’s agenda** in future.