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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL, THE
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

GLOBAL EUROPE:
A STRONGER PARTNERSHIP TO DELIVER MARKET ACCESS
FOR EUROPEAN EXPORTERS

SUMMARY OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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Executive summary

The EU's original 1996 Market Access Strategy aimed at enforcing multilateral and bilateral trade deals and at opening third country markets. This strategy had two pillars: providing information on market access conditions to EU business with the involvement of all relevant EU stakeholders; and creating a method on how to tackle barriers.

A decade on, the political and economic landscape of the world is changing. New significant trading partners are emerging. The nature of trade barriers has altered. EU business relies more on faster growing markets abroad which in turn helps fuel economic growth at home. In 2006, the Global Europe Communication called for the strategy on market access to be renewed.

The conclusions of the 2005 Market Access Symposium, the 2006 Crowell & Moring evaluation study and the 2006-7 on-line public consultation showed the need for the Commission to offer a real "service commitment" and to prioritise markets and barriers to get better results in partnership with Member States and business.

This Market Access Impact Assessment has analysed the current state of play and looks carefully at four options to assess the way forward:

- Option A. Reducing market access activity solely to information provision;
- Option B. Status quo with normal project adoptions/improvements;
- Option C. A more assertive approach; or
- Option D. A radical ambitious overhaul with the appointment of a special "Market Access Representative" and the establishment of a "Market Access Executive Agency".

The analysis showed that **Option C: A more assertive approach** was the most plausible means of reaching the requirements of the Global Europe Communication and of having a positive impact on the goals of the Lisbon Agenda. None of the four options are expected to have a negative impact on developing countries, nor on social and environmental policy.

The chosen approach would comprise a new Market Access Partnership focusing available resources on barriers and countries where EU business was likely to get the best results while not forgetting the needs of smaller EU Member States and SMEs in the process; more effective use of trade policy instruments; building cooperation with third countries with similar objectives in other markets on a case-by-case basis; an improved Market Access Database; the possibility of country reports on trade barriers; and an increasingly coordinated approach by all stakeholders. A "bottom up" approach will see the establishment of "market access networks" comprising of a new partnership between the Commission, Member States and business and including - at a local level - a stronger role for Commission Delegations.

In accordance with the Global Europe Communication Impact Assessment, a regular review would be conducted of the new Market Access Partnership. Monitoring indicators and evaluation tools will be established to give input to such a review. In addition, a further independent external evaluation should be conducted on the impact of the revised strategy within two-three years of its launch.

This document takes full account of the Opinion of the Impact Assessment Board issued on 9th March 2007.