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GLOBAL EUROPE: A STRONGER PARTNERSHIP TO DELIVER MARKET
ACCESS

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Brussels, 9 March 2007
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Opinion

Title **Impact Assessment on: Renewed Market Access Strategy**
(draft version of 16 February 2007)

Lead DG **DG TRADE**

1) Impact Assessment Board Opinion

(A) Context

The Strategy revises the 1996 Market Access Strategy. The political context has been set out in the 2006 Communication on Global Europe, updating the EU trade policy¹.

(B) Positive aspects

Discussion on the renewed market access strategy started as early as in 2005, and involved a wide range of stakeholders. This is a strong point in the development of the impact assessment, which can be further strengthened if the results from NGO consultations in March 2007 are added.

(C) Main recommendations for improvements

The recommendations below are listed in order of descending importance. Some more technical comments will be transmitted directly to the author DG.

General recommendation: The IA report needs to better situate the specific problem being addressed (e.g. enforcement, barrier identification) in the broader context of the Global Europe Communication, reinforce the assessment of implementation of the previous Market Access Strategy and compensate for the uncertainties and outstanding issues under the preferred option by clearer process definition to complete the strategy (e.g. as regards prioritisation) and stronger monitoring/evaluation mechanisms.

(1) Problem definition needs to be refined.

The IA report should give a better idea about the scope of the problem and its importance for the EU economy and it should situate the new Strategy more proportionately in the context of the 2006 Global Europe Communication.

In particular, the IA report should address the broader issue that market opening is a two-way process, involving for instance short term transaction costs stemming from adjustment to new

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/sectoral/competitiveness/global_europe_en.htm

market opportunities or from outsourcing.

The assessment of the past 10 years' experience of implementing the previous strategy should be given more attention and the IA report could usefully expand the discussion of poor enforcement and identification of barriers as key obstacles.

Whereas quantification through modelling of the potential impacts for the entire EU economy might be difficult, the IA report should at least use illustrative examples (on different sectors and countries) of the nature and scope of the problem.

(2) Value added of the new Strategy needs to be better explained.

The IA report needs to more clearly set out the lessons from implementation of the previous strategy and how the proposed new measures, such as a better co-ordination/partnership with Member States and business will bridge the identified gaps. Since the preferred policy option relies heavily on support from a wide range of stakeholders, the IA report should also more thoroughly explain stakeholders' view on that. Given the relatively general nature of the preferred option (in particular the absence at this stage of detailed prioritisation criteria), a more expanded section on monitoring should aim at clarifying how to measure progress towards delivering on the objectives and to identify corrective action enabling a quick response to changing global environment. The IA report should provide a time horizon and modalities for an evaluation of the new system.

(3) Prioritisation (of access to markets) should be analysed in more details.

The IA report outlines the modalities for the prioritisation of the Community's response to the difficulty for EU business to access certain markets in rather general terms. As the prioritisation can have implications both for EU business as for the resources needed to deliver on the Strategy objectives, more analysis is required.

The IA report should better demonstrate that prioritising could contribute to remedying identified problem(s). Given the absence of detailed criteria at this stage, the IA report could develop options for the prioritisation and, at least, clarify the planned process leading to prioritisation, including the development of criteria on which prioritisation will be based.

(D) Procedure and presentation

It appears that all necessary procedural elements have been complied with the requirements set out in the IA guidelines. On the editorial side, the IA report should avoid extensive quotations from the 2006 Global Europe communication.

2) IAB scrutiny process

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