Position Paper on EU Trade Helpdesk

Prepared for: Meeting of the EaP Panel on Trade

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Introduction

European Commission in cooperation with ITC has developed EU Trade Helpdesk, which was converted in a very useful instrument of getting necessary information for those, who are interested in trading goods with the EU.

Further Trade Helpdesk for Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was also developed IYC and EC. This tool is very well designed and provides useful information, including tariff and nontariff barriers on imports of goods in/from any EuroMed country to another or to the EU. It also covers trade statists and facilitates online business contacts by providing information on potential trade partners for the companies.

It is very important to create the same tool for EaP countries in order to facilitate and encourage regional trade in goods, provide more transparency in trade regimes between the countries and easily solve any dispute related to it. At the same time the EuroMed Helpdesk does not cover trade in services, which is highly desirable.

Trade in services between the EU and EaP countries is a rapidly growing. Possibilities have increased particularly due to the development of electronic communication tools, as well as relative opening of the movement of persons between countries. WTO framework, PCAs and AAs extensively talk about trade in services liberalisation, but it still remains largely protected and difficult to access. The situation is further complicated by very diverse approaches of states and very extensive lists of exclusions and reservations provided by the countries in GATS or in preferential arrangements agreements.

Argument

There is a huge potential for the development of trade in services between the EaP states, as well as between them and the EU. In particular, trade in services is less regulated within the Eurasian Customs Union, which makes it possible for the members to engage in more intensive and less restricted cooperation with the EU and DCFTA partner countries.

There are also fewer restrictions on provision of services between the EaP countries, but the population cannot fully use these opportunities due to the lack of information or the lack of flexible user's friendly tools which provide access to the necessary information. It is not easy for the citizens of EaP countries to explore the possibilities of providing services in the EU as member

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states mostly have different means of access to their service markets with various lists of exclusions and reservations for foreign persons.

Adding trade in services aspect to the EaP Helpdesk would assist potential service providers in finding opportunities and establishing their business in partner countries or develop cross-border supplies.

Conclusion

The position paper suggests to add to the EaP trade Helpdesk a dimension on Trade in Services and to provide data on trade in services between the EaP countries and the EU. This would allow the customer to become aware about possibilities, exclusions and exceptions in regards to the provision of services in the partner countries and EU, provided by international multilateral agreements and bilateral treaties, as well as by the internal legislation of each particular state (including EU member states).

More Information

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) is a unique multi-layered regional civil society platform aimed at promoting European integration, facilitating reforms and democratic transformations in the six Eastern Partnership countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Serving as the civil society and people-to-people dimension of the Eastern Partnership, the EaP CSF strives to strengthen civil society in the region, boost pluralism in public discourse and policy making by promoting participatory democracy and fundamental freedoms. For more information, please visit the EaP CSF website at www.eap-csf.eu