

NEWSLETTER

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Introduction

Hello again from the team at the [UK Single Market Centre](#) and welcome to the 2014 New Year edition of our Newsletter. We hope that you enjoy the following articles.

Technical Regulations Directive 98/34/EC joins UKSMC



The Technical Regulations Directive 98/34/EC has been part of the UK Single Market Centre since last November. The Directive aims to prevent countries creating new technical barriers to trade. In short, Member States must notify the Commission and other Member States of any new technical regulations well before they become law. The Commission and other Member States then have 3 months to raise any concerns if they believe it is a potential barrier to trade. More information can be found at: [Technical Standards and Regulations Directive 98/34/EC: guide for officials](#) and on the European Commission's Technical Regulations Information System (TRIS) website at: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tris/index_en.htm

Online Licensing on the up



It has been a very busy autumn for [GOV.UK](#). Online licensing is up by more than 400% compared to last year and this growth looks set to continue. This reflects feedback we have received from many authorities that have reported increased demand from their customers for them to be able to apply online.

In our last update, we mentioned some improvements we were planning. As part of that development programme, a prototype of data extraction was released before Christmas so that authorities and system providers could start to assess how this can be used to provide direct input into their own back office systems. This work will also give us a foundation for the development of web forms for high volume licences, notifications and registrations, which we hope to start making available in the spring.

Further improvements are also in the pipeline, including to the sign-on system to allow authorities to have self-service control user accounts for their staff. We hope these improvements will encourage more authorities to promote online licensing as their preferred option. Information about what licences are being applied for, and where, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/performance/licensing>

In other news, we are working with our colleagues in Holland to monitor the success of a promotion they are running on their Point of Single Contact, which highlights the benefits of starting a business or expanding into the UK. If this proves to be a success, we will be looking to expand these promotions and have reciprocal initiatives with other countries.

Ever expanding IMI



The Internal Market Information (IMI) system continues to expand. Last year saw the addition of Patients' Rights, Services Directive notifications, SOLVIT and E-Commerce notifications. Future additions include the [free movement of public documents](#) and the [return of cultural goods](#). There will also be increased

activity in the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (MRPQ) area as more competent authorities use the system following the revision to the MRPQ Directive (2005/36/EC) and the Regulation on administrative cooperation through the IMI system. The Commission has also revamped their [website](#) and there are other changes planned in 2014 such as the Services Alert mechanism.

SOLVIT - Busy as ever



The UK SOLVIT continues to be one of the busiest and most effective Centres in the EU. In October, following a poll of all SOLVIT Centres, the UK was named the SOLVIT Centre of the Year for 2012-13, for being the 'best centre in terms of availability, responsiveness, reaction and quality of work' and for our 'ability to work with precision and clarity at a high pace'.

In the last year our caseload against other Member States has increased significantly due to increased cooperation and interaction with other UK Authorities concerning UK citizens exercising their free movement rights. SOLVIT continues to be a very useful tool for helping us resolve problems caused by a lack of response from Authorities in other countries.

A recent success has been supporting a UK company whose product, although compliant with relevant standards, had been refused the right to access tax breaks in the Republic of Ireland because the product did not have a specific EU certification. UK SOLVIT took the complaint forward by referring to obligations under the Mutual Recognition Regulations and pointing out that the practice in Ireland appeared to constitute aid that threatened to distort competition, which goes against Article 107(1) of the TFEU. Following SOLVIT's intervention, the Irish agreed to amend its technical criteria for accessing the tax breaks, and contacted the UK company directly to invite them to apply. The Commission has published a booklet with other success stories, which is freely available at: <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/solvit-pbKM0313252/>

Internal Market Scoreboard



Although the Commission has yet to formally confirm the results from the recent Internal Market Scoreboard, (No. 28), it looks very likely that this time round the UK will have failed to meet the Commission-set 1% deficit target. This is unfortunate given that, in the previous Scoreboard (No. 27 in May 2013), the UK achieved its best ever result of 0.5%.

So, given the importance Ministers place on our Scoreboard rating, we are now working hard with other Government Departments to ensure that we meet the 1% target in the next Scoreboard, which will cover those Directives with a transposition deadline of 30 April 2014.

Our next Newsletter will be issued in April 2014. If you would like to suggest or contribute an article, please contact Herbee Thomas herbee.thomas@bis.gsi.gov.uk We would also welcome feedback on any of the items mentioned in this newsletter.

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