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Introduction

Hello from the team at the [UK Single Market Centre](#) and welcome to the first Issue of our Newsletter. The Centre has been operating since last December and brings all the practical support tools that help deliver the benefits of the “EU Single Market” within a single team. In this edition, we thought we would tell you more about some of the areas we cover.

SOLVIT- What is it?



SOLVIT is a user-friendly, free of charge service that helps businesses and citizens find fast and pragmatic solutions to their single market problems. SOLVIT Centres in each EU country (plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) work together to try to resolve problems arising from the misapplication or misinterpretation of EU free movement legislation by public authorities. SOLVIT can help with business problems in areas such as market access for products, VAT reimbursement, public procurement, restriction on provision of services, and with citizens' problems in areas such as getting their professional qualifications recognised, vehicle registration, voting rights and

access to social security.

While SOLVIT cannot resolve every problem, and our clients retain the right to pursue the matter through the courts if they're dissatisfied with the outcome, SOLVIT offers a service where users have said that they: 'really appreciate the privilege of having someone to argue the case for fairness' and 'express gratitude for the absolutely invaluable assistance, where the manner of handling the case was exemplary in its efficiency'.

A View on the Point of Single Contact



Applying for licences is rarely a fun activity and this applies equally to the authorities responsible for processing them. When you wanted a licence extension for your birthday party in a pub this would have traditionally involved a tedious and complicated paper process. Forms had to be completed by hand and in many cases copied to several authorities. The Electronic Licence Management System (ELMS) system launched in December 2009 and provided an online application option; however, uptake was slower than we had hoped due to its complexity.

When the BusinessLink site closed last October, the [GOV.UK](#) Licensing service – powering applications like [registering a food business](#) and [holding a licensed event on unlicensed premises](#) – launched alongside the main [GOV.UK](#) site. Since then, it has processed around 32,000 licences. At the Government Digital Service (GDS), we always measure success with actual data and, looking at the number of applications in the last three months compared to the same period last year, we've seen numbers nearly treble – from 6,343 under ELMS to 17,872 via GOV.UK. In addition, the majority of the qualitative feedback we've received says that GOV.UK Licensing is an improvement on the previous system.

There's much more to do, of course. Since the launch of the service, GDS has been working with local authorities to better understand their needs. We've also created services that reflect [different licensing requirements across the UK](#). Being a small, agile team we've been able to meet with users and service managers, listen to their feedback and use it to make improvements.

For applicants, we've removed the need for Government Gateway registration and made the process simpler. We've also increased the file size limit for documents that need to be uploaded to support applications, such as building plans or copies of certificates. Recent improvements for local authority users include adding an 'ownership' function. This helps their team members know who is dealing with an application and avoids duplication. Coming soon, we're hoping to design online forms for the most popular licences. These will replace the current PDFs which have to be downloaded, completed then uploaded. This will further simplify submitting and processing applications. It will also allow the data to be made available electronically to further improve efficiency through the removal of duplication and errors.

There's always room for more and we're keen to carry on improving the service. If you're a member of the public who has used the system, or a local authority, we'd love to hear from you.

David Williams, Business Analyst, Cabinet Office, Government Digital Service
E-mail: david.williams@digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk



IMI Success Story from UK NCP



UKSMC acts as the UK coordinator on the EU-wide Internal Market Information System (IMI), which allows different licensing and other regulatory bodies, including local authorities, to be easily identified; and help them in checking out information on people who apply to work or want to set up business in a country.

For example, the UK National Contact Point (UK NCP) for professional qualifications received an enquiry via IMI from the Austrian regulator for craft professions. The Austrian authorities had an application for recognition from a carpenter with work experience from the UK and needed to find out whether carpenters in the UK are regulated. UK NCP was able to confirm that carpenters in the UK are not subject to mandatory regulation, allowing the Austrian authorities to process the application for recognition in line with the relevant EU legislation on professional recognition.

Internal Market Scoreboard Success



European Commission



The Commission's Internal Market Scoreboard measures how quickly and how well each EU country transposes Internal Market Directives into national law. Improving the UK's Scoreboard performance directly benefits UK businesses and jobs and supports growth.

In the latest Scoreboard (No. 27), sent from the European Commission to every EU country, listing their outstanding EU Directives, the UK achieved its best ever score.

The UK was ranked joint 12th out of 27 European countries. Not only did we exceed the 1% transposition deficit target and achieved our best ever deficit score of 0.5%, we also met the 0% "zero-tolerance" target for long overdue Directives. The Scoreboard report can be found on the Single Market Scoreboard website at:

http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/scoreboard/index_en.htm The Commission launched the Single Market Scoreboard website on 4 July 2013 and it incorporates interactive comprehensive reports on 13 governance tools including monitoring the correct transposition of EU directives, analysis of infringement proceedings.

We hope this first edition gives you an idea of what we do. Our next issue will be sent out in **January 2014**.