



Recent Developments in the European Union

1999

LRA-D-PUB-001512

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European Parliament approves New Commission¹

On Sept. 15th, 1999, the European Parliament gave its approval to the newly formed Commission and on Sept. 16 formally appointed the new Commissioners. Under the Treaty of Amsterdam which established new procedures for the appointment of commissioners, the 20 Commissioners were selected based on agreement between their respective government and the President of the Commission.

Veterinary Agreement between European Union and the United States²

A recently signed veterinary agreement between the EU and the US entered into force on August 1, 1999. In general, the agreement aims to facilitate trade in animal and animal products between the two regions by setting up a mechanism for the recognition of equivalence of sanitary measures applied in each party. The total trade between the US and EU in the products included in this agreement is about \$1.5 billion in each direction. The legislation of the European Union on this issue remains unaffected. The Agreement is in line with obligation for both parties pursuant to WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

Annual Report on Barriers to Trade and Investment in the United States³

The European Commission has just published its annual report on Barriers to Trade and Investment in the United States. The report highlights the barriers which exporters and investors confront when they engage in business in the US. Such impediments include tariff and non-tariff obstacles, differing legal and regulatory systems or lack of international rules. The report also noted a particular issue which is still the source of friction between the two countries, that is the extraterritorial provisions of a number of laws enacted by the US Congress such as Helms-Burton Act and the Iran-Libyan Act. The EU opposes the adoption of such laws and has requested that the US Congress take action on this issue.

¹Http://europa.eu.int/comm/newcomm/index_en.htm

²<Http://www.eurunion.org/news/press/1999/1999048.htm>.

³<Http://www.eurunion.org/news/eurecom/1999/ecom0999.htm>

Proposal to Amend the Money Laundering Directive⁴

The European Commission has proposed an amendment to the existing legislation on money laundering upon taking into account that a number of professions and activities should play a more active role in combating organized crime and its proceeds. Under the 1991 Directive, financial institutions must be aware of the identity of their customers when they open a new account or a safe deposit or when a single or linked transaction is more than 15,000 euro; they are also required that they keep appropriate records. The Directive lifts the banking secrecy requirement if it is deemed necessary and contains a notification requirement of the appropriate authorities. The proposal requires that additional sectors, such as real estate, accounting and auditing, casinos as well as lawyers and notaries and dealers in precious stones and metals report cases involving money laundering to the appropriate authorities. However, those lawyers who represent a client in legal proceedings will be exempt from the requirement to report. They may report such illegal activities to the bar association they are members of.

International Conference Against Child Pornography on Internet⁵

In an effort to curb the widespread phenomenon of child pornography on internet and due to the fact that the majority of internet users and providers are based in European Union and the United States, the EU and the US will participate in a conference on “Combating Child Pornography on the Internet.” The conference is organized based on an initiative by the Foreign Ministers of Austria and the US and is financed by Austria, US and the STOP program of the European Commission. The goal of this conference is to enforce cooperation among law-enforcement officials and the judiciary; to establish codes of conduct among internet providers; and to encourage the setting-up of hotlines.

⁴*Id.*

⁵[Http://www.stop-childpornog.at/conf.asp?lang=en](http://www.stop-childpornog.at/conf.asp?lang=en)