

**Hellenic Presidency of the Council of the EU
Ministry for Competitiveness and Development
Presentation of Presidency's priorities before the Committee for Internal Market
and Consumer Protection of the European Parliament**

**Talking Points of Minister Hatzidakis
22/1/2014**

The fifth Hellenic Presidency comes at a transition period for Europe. On the road to recovery from a persistent crisis and struggling to get back on track while faced with the challenge of the European Elections, we need to prove that our efforts can bear fruit.

In this light, growth and job creation are among the priorities for the Hellenic Presidency. Hence, all our efforts are inextricably related to both end results.

Of course we know that miracles do not occur but it is our duty to promote growth-oriented policies that can boost competitiveness, social cohesion and most importantly create new jobs.

We are aware that **our Presidency is bizarre as regards time constraints**. But we are **determined** to promote tangible and pragmatic decisions on the various points on our agenda. Our objective is to **surprise you in a positive way**. We want to become the catalyst during the inter-institutional negotiations, to provide good services, to help to overcome deadlocks. And above all, we want to deliver results.

In this effort, **our cooperation with the competent committees in the European Parliament and the Commission and the will be invaluable**. As you may know I have served 13 years as Member of this House, you can count on me, chair Mr. Harbour and honorable colleagues, as a true and honest partner. European Parliament's positions and opinions will always be a priority for our presidency.

In the Competitiveness Council which I will be presiding for the next six months, our work needs to reflect our determination to improve the function of the internal market and improve competitiveness while protecting consumers.

Competitiveness is key in overcoming the economic crisis and battling rising unemployment that Europe is being faced with over the last years. Reclaiming the European Single Market's competitiveness is a necessary step towards providing new impetus to bring the European economies back on track. The Greek Presidency will be placing special focus on financing of SMEs, the locomotive of European growth and employment. Promoting research and development and innovation, as well as improving the legal and consumer framework will also be among the Presidency's priorities.

Allow me now to refer briefly to our main legislative priorities, which fall under the competences of your committee, and namely: the **Technical Harmonization**, the **Package Travel and Assisted Travel Arrangements**, the **Product safety and Market**

Surveillance Package and the proposal for a Directive in e-Invoicing in Public Procurement.

First, although I believe it is not the most popular topic in your agenda, I would like also to express my great satisfaction for the provisional agreement reached between Council and European Parliament representatives **on the new radio equipment directive**, thanks to your significant contribution Mrs. Weiler as draftsman of the relevant Report. It is the first file to be finalized during the Greek Presidency of the Compet Council. The remarkable job done by the Irish and Lithuanian presidencies was concluded by the Hellenic Presidency. It is a good start and it is the way we want to continue. Moreover, our compromise proposal for **the pressure equipment**, Mrs. Roithova is draftsman from your side, is being discussed today in COREPER I in order to get a Mandate for negotiations with the EP. As far as **the transfer of registration of motor vehicles**, a partial mandate was given on 18 December and now we are looking forward to work together with Mr. Manders and your Committee to secure an agreement as soon as possible for the adoption of this act in time before the end of this legislature. Finally, Mrs Sehnalova, our intention regarding the Regulation on E-call is to pave the way for an early second reading agreement during the Italian Presidency.

Although the file is being handled by the Greek Ministry of Tourism, I would like to say few words regarding the **Package Travel and Assisted Travel Arrangements Directive**, since it falls under the competences of your committee, and more specifically the work made by my old colleague Mr. Hans-Peter Mayer. The Hellenic Presidency attaches great importance to this proposed Directive since it has great impact on Tourism. In the four Working Parties held under Lithuanian Presidency 11 Articles out of 29 in total were examined. The Greek Presidency aims at finalising the first reading and prepares a progress report for the upcoming Italian Presidency

E-Invoicing in Public Procurement and the **Product Safety and Market Surveillance Package**, both are key actions in the **Single Market Act II** and thus high priority for the Greek Presidency.

Regarding e-invoicing, I would like first to congratulate Mrs. Collin-Langen for the excellent result during the vote and the unanimous support of her report by your Committee in 17th of December last year. E-invoicing is an action with **high economic importance and cost-saving potential**. I would like to share with you my confidence that **we can achieve together the final adoption of this file in first reading during the Greek Presidency**. Significant progress has been made on 14 January and yesterday's trilogue meetings, which resulted to have only the issue of the deadlines still open on the table. Mr. Harbour, I would like to personally thank you for your contribution to overcome the remaining obstacle in order to have an agreement in the COREPER I meeting on the 24th.

However, despite the constructive work of your rapporteurs Mrs. Schaldemose and Mrs Pietikainen, developments have been less positive regarding the **Product safety and Market Surveillance Package**. We are all aware of the problematic article 7 of the Product Safety Regulation, regarding the so-called "made in" clause, and of the

division existing between the Member States in COREPER I. The Greek Presidency has come up with constructive compromise proposals aiming at overcoming the deadlock in the negotiations. We are fully determined to examine all options in order to bridge the gap between Member States on this issue.

I would like to thank you all for your attention.