

EUROCHAMBRES and the European Committee of the Regions released a list of recommendations on the implementation of FTAs

The implementation of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) is one of the topics in discussion today during the Foreign Affairs Council. EUROCHAMBRES and the European Committee of the Regions urge that the recommendations on how to boost uptake of FTA be taken into consideration.

Early this week, during the workshop: making EU Trade Agreements work to the benefit of businesses and regions, EUROCHAMBRES and the European Committee of the Regions released the results of a joint survey to identify opportunities and obstacles faced in the implementation of EU FTAs.

According to the key findings of the survey, FTA remain an attractive force for business and regions, but more practical information and better guidance is needed on the implementation of EU's FTA. Some core components of FTAs, such as burdensome customs procedures or administrative burdens should be simplified.

Based on the results of the survey, the following recommendation were released:

1. Addressing the implementation gap through dedicated trade implementation action plans that accompany mayor EU FTAs. This means improving the dialogue and partnership between the business community, national and regional policy makers to identify the most effective measures are needed in each member state;
2. Improving members states' support, which was found to lag behind expectations of business and regional actors and create an overview of actions taken to support SMEs when implementing FTAs;
3. Addressing the knowledge gap surrounding EU FTAs by providing practical information how SMEs can make use of a given FTA in practice;
4. Reducing the complexity and lack of coherence of the EU's rules of origin, provide better access to information and means of participation in public procurement abroad.
5. Providing an online rules of origin calculator for SMEs as first line of support.
6. Creating a trade agreement implementation officer at EU representations in EU member states to ensure that stakeholders have a direct point of contact from the EU;
7. Inviting member states and regional authorities to seek stronger cooperation with national and regional Chambers to capitalize on their experience – given their role in helping businesses - especially SMEs - go global;
8. Increasing FTA awareness to be paired with other policy solutions in order to boost FTA uptake and define the competitiveness of regions and SMEs. There are a number of national and European programmes to support internationalisation, research and innovation, but it is also necessary to create the right conditions for businesses.

More information:

Report of the survey on the implementation of FTA: <http://bit.ly/SurveyTrade>

Press Release of the survey: http://bit.ly/PR_TradeSurvey

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