

## **Ministers Tuppurainen and Dahlgren: functioning single market provides key to recovery**

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented the European Union with unprecedented challenges. The social and economic impact of the pandemic is significant. Ambitious action is needed to safeguard the well-being of citizens and to put Europe on the path to recovery.

A well-functioning single market is a guarantee of the EU's prosperity, and its value for citizens and businesses has been proven during the recent crisis months. Securing and strengthening the single market should be at the heart of the EU's recovery and long-term growth.

It is vital that the EU can harness the full potential of the single market. This includes a stronger focus on implementation and enforcement of the existing EU legislation; in other words, we must carry out what we have agreed upon in the Council. Making full use of our strengths in the digital economy, climate-neutral technologies and circular economy helps build lasting sustainable growth and boosts competitiveness and renewal of the European economy.

The free movement of services is at the core of the single market and could provide significant economic gains, provided there is adequate and active enforcement by local, regional and national authorities and the Commission. On our road to recovery, new impetus must therefore be given to the internal market for services and the eliminating of barriers. A recovery plan should include the implementation of the Commission's March communication.

A fair, open and competitive home market needs to remain a starting point in promoting the level playing field globally and within the EU. This goes hand in hand with maintaining a strict and independent competition policy. Any distortions of competition will weaken our competitiveness in the longer run.

The temporary regime for state aid during the crisis is of utmost importance. However, for the further development of the European economy, it is vital that competition and state aid rules remain strict and efficient. They must allow effective interventions against anti-competitive practices and ensure the level playing field between Member States

International trade will play a major role in overcoming the COVID 19 crisis and supporting the recovery process in the EU and worldwide. The EU's role as a defender of multilateral cooperation and rules-based free trade is crucial in times of protectionist tendencies. The discussion on the European strategic autonomy must not lead to protectionism.

A need to evaluate the EU's trade policy after COVID-19 is something that should be looked at with patience and care, without jumping into conclusions. We must be pragmatic and not forget the vast benefits that have been brought by decades of free trade. The EU should always be a champion of free trade, not an instigator of trade wars.

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