

Chapter 3

Developments in the Internal Market during Malta's Presidency

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Introduction

The single market, referred to in the EU treaties after the Maastricht amendments as the “Internal Market”, is one of Europe’s major achievements encompassing the so called four freedoms. It is an engine for building a stronger and fairer EU economy among the peoples of Europe. By allowing people, goods, services and capital to move more freely it opens up new opportunities for citizens, workers, businesses and consumers. This leads to the creation of jobs and growth in Europe which the EU urgently needs. The more integrated and deeper capital markets are the more they can channel more funding to companies, especially SMEs, and infrastructure projects. Better worker mobility allows people to move more freely where their skills are needed further contributing to the concept of a peoples’ Europe. Combatting tax evasion and tax fraud ensures that all contribute their fair share of tax to the EU’s coffers. This paper seeks to highlight the main achievements towards the evolution of the EU Internal Market during 2017 and in particular during the six months of Malta’s presidency of the EU Council of Ministers between January 2017 and June 2017. The evolution of legislation that happens during a six-month presidency is not necessarily due to the direct input of the presidency itself, and hence the achievements or the lack of them as discussed below, should not be considered as a judgement on the presidency itself. The aim of this paper is simply to discuss what has happened in the mentioned period rather than argue from a legal point of view the successes or failures of the rotating presidency in question. This paper also focuses on some of the main areas of the Internal Market and does not seek to provide a comprehensive overview of all the developments that have occurred.

The deepening of the EU’s Internal Market has been one of highest priorities for Malta, with the presidency pushing for more EU legislation to address the challenges faced by SMEs and consumers. Also high on the list was the end of roaming charges on mobile phones. Developing a digital internal market and an internal market for energy would benefit the economy, businesses, and families.⁵⁶ The first part of the paper focuses on the Digital Single Market. Malta’s presidency gave priority to the e-commerce package as well as the proposed Regulation on cross-border portability of online content services in the internal market. Also reference is made to the

⁵⁶ Government of Malta (2016) p. 2.

discussions on copyright reform. The second part of the paper focuses on the work done on cooperation between the national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws with the aim of reaching a General Approach. The final part of the paper covers the framework of the Single Market strategy and the debate to upgrade SOLVIT and the Single Market Information Tool which are part of the Enforcement Package together with the Single Digital Gateway. The above are the three main issues tackled during the last six months of 2017 and so the paper explores and discusses Malta’s contribution to the formulation of legislation in this field during this period.

The diagram below shows the main objectives of the legislative programme for the Internal Market during the Maltese presidency in 2017 and the progress made on this issue by all the three legislative bodies during this period.⁵⁷ The data and the text for the table below is obtained from the Malta’s presidency’s website and from DG Markt’s website where it indicates the legislations’ current position at the end of 2017. The text on the right column is reproduced ad verbatim from DG Markt’s website.⁵⁸

Diagram 1 - Main Objectives of the Legislative Programme of the Internal Market (January to June 2017)	
What was said in the Maltese pre-Presidency Programme 2017	Appraisal of what was/was not Achieved
Ending roaming charges throughout the EU, so that citizens can stay in touch when they travel;	Achieved - Malta signed off on some of the easier files, already largely negotiated by the Slovak presidency before them. Agreements on ending <u>mobile phone roaming charges</u> and portability of online content, like Netflix subscriptions, were among these. They stewarded negotiations beefing up cooperation among consumer protection bodies and free public Wi-Fi to the finish line.
Making progress towards ensuring that consumers seeking to buy products and services in another EU country, be it online or in person, are not discriminated against based on nationality or country of residence in terms of access to prices, sales or payment conditions (geoblocking);	Achieved – Geo-blocking is a discriminatory practice that prevents online customers from accessing and purchasing products or services from a website based in another member state. In order to remove this barrier, the Council is working with the European Parliament on a geo-blocking regulation. On 29 th November 2017, EU ambassadors confirmed an agreement between the

⁵⁷ Government of Malta (2016).

⁵⁸ www.ec.europa.eu, accessed on 20th December 2017.

	<p>Estonian presidency of the Council and the Parliament to ban unjustified geo-blocking. This was thanks to the work carried out during the first half of the year.</p> <p>The draft regulation, which needs to be adopted by the two institutions, aims to remove discrimination based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers' nationality • place of residence • place of establishment <p>The ban on geo-blocking is an important element of the digital single market strategy.</p> <p>Once it takes effect, the geo-blocking regulation will supplement other landmark achievements such as the end of roaming charges for mobile phones and the introduction of cross-border portability for online subscriptions.</p>
<p>Ensuring a sharper focus in EU legislation in addressing the challenges faced by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by enabling the development of a wider range of funding sources through action on the Capital Markets Union;</p>	<p>Progress was made but discussions are still on going. The Single Market Strategy is the European Commission's plan to unlock the full potential of the Single Market. The Single Market is at the heart of the European project, but its benefits do not always materialise because Single Market rules are not known or implemented, or they are undermined by other barriers. So the Commission has decided to give the Single Market a boost by <u>improving mobility for service providers, ensuring that innovative business models can flourish, making it easier for retailers to do business across borders, and enhancing access to goods and services throughout the EU.</u></p>
<p>Growth and jobs remain an overarching priority for all EU Member States and for the EU as a whole. The extension in time and financial capacity of the European Fund for Strategic Investment will be a priority file during the Maltese Presidency to help mobilise private investment while making smart use of scarce budgetary resources;</p>	<p>Progress was made but this is an on-going process. The European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI) is one of the three pillars of the <u>Investment Plan for Europe</u> and aims to overcome current market failures by addressing market gaps and mobilising private investment. It helps to finance strategic investments in key areas such as infrastructure, research and innovation, education, renewable energy and energy efficiency as well as risk finance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).</p>
<p>Reviewing the Energy Efficiency package aimed at reducing energy consumption in</p>	<p>Progress was made. On 30th November 2016 the Commission proposed an <u>update</u></p>

<p>residential buildings and industry through improved energy efficiency;</p>	<p><u>to the Energy Efficiency Directive</u> including a new 30% energy efficiency target for 2030, and measures to update the Directive to make sure the new target is met.</p>
<p>Strengthening security of energy supply for all EU citizens, particularly in times of crises;</p>	<p>Progress was made. On 18th May 2017 the European Commission, together with 14 EU countries (Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden) signed a political declaration to launch the new 'Clean Energy for EU Islands' initiative. Aimed at accelerating the clean energy transition on Europe's more than 2,700 islands, this initiative will help islands reduce their dependency on energy imports by making better use of their own renewable energy sources and embracing more modern and innovative energy systems. This will help reduce energy costs and at the same time improve air quality and lower greenhouse gas emissions. Signed in Valetta in the margins of the Informal Energy Council, which brings together EU energy ministers, the initiative will provide opportunities to compare notes on common problems that different islands face, building on best practices and experience from pilot projects. Part of the scheme is also intended to make it easier to access new energy technologies and sources of funding. The initiative was originally announced as part of the Commission's "<u>Clean Energy for All Europeans</u>" package of proposals in November 2016.</p> <p>Marking this new initiative, European Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel Arias Cañete said: "Due to their location, many of our islands have expensive oil-based energy structures which mean that they are still dependent on costly fossil fuel imports. The "Clean Energy for EU Islands' initiative will help them to access the support, expertise and funding they need to go local and generate their own clean, low-cost energy from renewable sources."</p> <p>The initiative will create a forum for all those with an interest in the clean energy transition on EU islands to share best practice and support the creation of a long-term framework to promote funding and technical assistance.</p>

	<p>At the meeting of the Informal Energy Council, ministers also looked at the <u>proposal</u> for a revised <u>Energy Efficiency Directive</u> included in the 'Clean Energy for All Europeans' package, including the Commission's proposal to move to a binding 30% <u>energy efficiency</u> target for the EU as a whole by 2030.</p> <p>The Informal Council was followed by an Informal High Level Meeting on Energy Efficiency in the Mediterranean. Ministers, along with representatives of the Commission, private sector and regional bodies, discussed how to increase energy efficiency in the Mediterranean's buildings and the tourism sector.</p>
<p>Allowing EU consumers to continue enjoying their “home” subscription to Audio Visual online content when visiting another Member State;</p>	<p>Progress was made. The Council agreed on a general approach on a draft regulation aimed at ensuring the cross-border portability of online content services in the internal market.</p> <p>The agreement enables the Council to start negotiations with the European Parliament, once the Parliament has set its negotiating position, under the ordinary legislative procedure.</p> <p>The president of the Council and minister for economic affairs of the Netherlands, Henk Kamp, made the following comments: “This initiative will make life easier for European citizens when they travel, by allowing them to keep accessing online content they have legally acquired or subscribed to in their home member state when they are temporarily in another member state. This means that citizens who are in another member state for purposes such as holidays or business trips can enjoy for example music, films, games or sporting events just like at home”.</p>
<p>Reassigning the high speed 700 MHz band (694-790 MHz) currently used for digital television broadcasting and wireless microphones, to wireless broadband services, thus allowing this band to be used for 5G;</p>	<p>Progress was made on what has started during the previous Slovak Presidency.</p>

The Digital Single Market

The internet and digital technologies are transforming our world as we know it, but existing barriers online mean citizens miss out on goods and services, internet companies and start-ups have their horizons limited, and businesses and governments cannot fully benefit from digital tools. The EU's Internal Market's legislative framework as explained in the opening paragraph of this paper has to be improved to make it fit for the digital age – tearing down regulatory walls and moving from twenty-eight national markets to a single one. This could contribute €415 billion per year to our economy and create hundreds of thousands of new jobs.⁵⁹

One of the objectives of the EU throughout 2017 and beyond is to boost e-commerce by tackling geo-blocking and making cross-border parcel delivery more affordable and efficient. The proposed regulation on geo-blocking has an objective to provide more opportunities to customers. It addresses the problem of customers not being able to buy products and services from traders located in a different Member State, or being discriminated against in accessing the best prices or sales conditions compared to nationals or residents. This shows how the current existing legal framework is not sufficient to cater for e-business. The EU's Commission seeks to modernise copyright rules to fit the digital age as well as update EU audio-visual rules and work platforms to create a fairer environment for everyone, promote European films, protect children and tackle hate speech.⁶⁰

The e-commerce package is composed of legislative proposals to address unjustified geo-blocking and other forms of discrimination on the grounds of nationality, residence or establishment. There is also a legislative proposal on cross-border parcel delivery services to increase the transparency of prices and improve regulatory oversight. The package also includes a legislative proposal to strengthen enforcement of consumers' rights and guidance to clarify, among others, what qualifies as an unfair commercial practice in the digital world. The proposed regulation on geo-blocking intends to provide more opportunities to customers. It addresses the problem of customers being stopped from buying products and services from traders located in a different Member State, or being discriminated in accessing the best prices or sales conditions compared to nationals or residents. Online sales of products are growing by 22% per year. The main elements of the proposal include the sale of products and services, access to websites, and non-discrimination in payments.

High prices and the inconvenience of cross-border parcel delivery plus different legislation in Member States are one of the biggest obstacles for consumers and retailers who would like to buy and sell online across the EU.

⁵⁹ European Commission (2017).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

The regulation proposed by the Commission on 25th May 2016 will increase price transparency and regulatory oversight of cross-border parcel delivery services. This means that consumers and retailers can benefit from affordable deliveries and convenient return options even to and from peripheral regions. The main elements of the proposal include increased regulatory oversight of all parcel delivery services providers and price transparency through the publication of domestic and cross-border prices for a set of basic services. There is also the requirement of universal service providers to offer transparent and non-discriminatory third party access to multilateral cross-border agreements in the EU.⁶¹

In line with the above proposals the Commission also proposes a review of the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Regulation. This is intended to give more powers to national authorities to better enforce consumer rights. Relevant authorities will be able to check if websites geo-block consumers or offer after-sales conditions not respecting EU rules (e.g. withdrawal rights) as well as order the immediate take-down of websites hosting scams. The Proposal wants to empower national authorities to request information from domain registrars and banks to detect the identity of the responsible trader. The Commission is also publishing updated guidelines on unfair commercial practices. This is intended to respond to the challenges presented by the digital world. The revised guidance also incorporates two sets of self-regulatory principles agreed among stakeholders. For the geo-blocking proposal to deliver its intended benefits, enforcement is needed. Once adopted, the proposal on geo-blocking would be enforced by the consumer protection authorities in the framework of the CPC Regulation regulating business-to-consumer transactions.⁶²

Another important development is the scaling up of Europe's response to cyber-attacks by strengthening ENISA – the EU cybersecurity agency. This is complemented by creating an effective EU cyber deterrence and criminal law response to better protect Europe's citizens, businesses and public institutions.⁶³ ENISA is the European Union Agency for Network and Information Security and it has a key role to play but is constrained by its current mandate. The Commission presents an ambitious reform proposal, including a permanent mandate for the agency to ensure that it can provide support to Member States, EU institutions and businesses in key areas, including the implementation of the NIS Directive. It will also contribute to stepping up both operational cooperation and crisis management across the EU.⁶⁴

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

The growth of the EU cybersecurity market in terms of products, services and processes is held back in a number of ways, but most of all because of the lack of a cybersecurity certification scheme recognized across the EU. The Commission is therefore putting forward a proposal to set up an EU certification framework with ENISA at its heart. A joint Commission-industry initiative will also be launched to define a “duty of care” principle to reduce product and software vulnerabilities and promote a “security by design” approach for all connected devices.

Another important development deals with the NIS directive. It is necessary to swiftly implement the NIS directive (Directive on security of network and information systems), adopted in July 2016. This is facilitated thanks to the Commission’s guidance on how the Directive should operate in practice and additional interpretation of specific provisions included in the September 2017 package.⁶⁵

Other initiatives seek to unlock the potential of a European data economy with a framework for the free flow of non-personal data in the EU. This ensures that everyone in the EU has the best possible internet connection, so they can fully engage in the digital economy, the so-called “connectivity for a European gigabit society”. This is complemented by the adaptation of e-Privacy rules to the new digital environment. This helps SMEs, researchers, citizens and public authorities to make the most of new technologies by ensuring that everyone has the necessary digital skills, and by funding EU research in health and high performance computing.

During the Maltese Presidency, in June 2017 a Digital Assembly 2017 was held. The key priorities discussed were: a) Data economy; b) New digital opportunities; c) Cybersecurity and Internet of Things; and d) Digital transformation. One of the matters discussed was e-Privacy. The e-Privacy Directive and the General Data Protection Regulation provide the legal framework to ensure digital privacy for EU citizens. The European Commission has reviewed the Directive to align it with the new data protection rules. Common EU rules have been established to ensure that personal data enjoy a high standard of protection everywhere in the EU. Currently, one can mention two main pillars of the data protection legal framework in the EU are the e-Privacy Directive (Directive on Privacy and Electronic communications), and the General Data Protection Regulation, adopted in May 2016.

The EU General Data Protection Regulation ensures that personal data can only be gathered under strict conditions and for legitimate purposes. Bodies and authorities that collect and manage one’s personal information must also protect it from misuse and respect certain rights. The e-Privacy Directive

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

builds on the EU telecoms and data protection frameworks to ensure that all communications over public networks maintain respect for fundamental rights, in particular a high level of data protection and of privacy, regardless of the technology used. The European Commission adopted a proposal for a Regulation on Privacy and Electronic Communications to replace the 2009 Directive on 10th January 2017.

The e-Privacy Directive requires Member States to ensure that users grant their consent before cookies are stored and accessed in computers, smartphones or other device connected to the Internet. The draft Regulation introduces the concept of “privacy by design” whereby users opt for a higher or lower level of privacy. Telecom operators and Internet Service Providers possess a huge amount of customers’ data, which must be kept confidential and secure. Sometimes sensible information can be stolen or lost, or illegally accessed so the e-Privacy Directive ensures that the provider reports any “personal data breach” to the national authority and informs the subscriber or individual directly of any risk related to personal data or privacy. No specific provisions on personal data breaches are included in the draft Regulation. One needs to rely on the relevant provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation.

Another initiative discussed during the June 2017 Valletta Conference was the European Commission wish to promote free Wi-Fi connectivity for citizens and visitors in public spaces such as parks, squares, and do on. The idea is to have Wi-Fi everywhere in Europe through WiFi4EU. Other discussions focused on the Next Generation Internet, International connectivity, the Digital Single Market mid-term review, the European Broadband Fund and Data economy.

Enforcing Consumer Laws

During Malta’s presidency of the Council of the EU, a boost was given to the Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) which is a **network of authorities** responsible for enforcing EU consumer protection laws in EU and EEA countries. It allows any authority in a country where consumers' rights are being violated, to **ask its counterpart** in the country where the trader is based to **take action** to stop a breach of law. The Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Regulation sets a list of minimum powers which each authority must have to ensure smooth cooperation. These include power to obtain the information and evidence needed to: a) tackle infringements within the EU; b) conduct on-site inspections; c) require cessation or prohibition of infringements committed within the EU; and d) obtain from traders’ undertakings. Authorities can also **alert each other to malpractices** that could spread to other countries. With the Commission's support, they can also **coordinate their approaches in the**

application of consumer protection law to tackle widespread infringements.⁶⁶

On 25th May 2016, the European Commission launched a proposal for the reform of the Consumer Protection Cooperation. The reform addresses the need to better enforce EU consumer legislation, especially in the fast evolving digital sphere. During 2017, progress was made in this regard. Enforcement authorities will get the powers they need to work together in a quicker and more efficient manner. They will be able to request information from domain registrars and banks to detect the identity of the responsible trader. They can also carry out mystery shopping to check geographical discrimination or after-sales conditions, and order the immediate take-down of websites that host scams. The Commission will eventually be able to launch and coordinate common action by consumer protection authorities in the Member States to address EU-wide problematic practices. A one-stop-shop approach to consumer law is being proposed. Enforcement authorities in the Member States will notify the businesses concerned of the issues, asking them to change their bad practices.⁶⁷

To detect market problems earlier, organizations with an interest in consumer protection such as consumer organizations and European Consumer Centres will be able to signal bad cross-borders practice to enforcers and to the European Commission. Finally, one can mention the list of laws to which this modernized framework applies. This will be updated to ensure that all the relevant consumer protection rules are included, especially in the transport and retail financial services sectors. The Commission's proposal is being discussed by the European Parliament and Council and this was an important objective during both the Maltese and Estonian presidencies during 2017.

The reform addresses the need to better enforce EU consumer legislation, especially in the fast evolving digital sphere. Enforcement authorities will get the powers they need to work together in a quicker and more efficient manner. The new **shared enforcement** approach, first applied to the in-app purchases initiative launched by the CPC and coordinated by the Commission in 2014, has also been used to resolve problems encountered by consumers when renting a car (2016). In 2017/2018, the focus is on social media operators requesting them to modify terms that appear to infringe consumer law and create a mechanism for removing frauds and scams misleading consumers. An **E-enforcement academy was set up** to boost the CPC and product safety networks' ability to conduct online investigations. The CPC projects have used the **CPC knowledge exchange platform**, an IT

⁶⁶ European Commission (2016).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

tool developed in 2014-2015, to support collaborative work and share results with the wider CPC network.⁶⁸

The Single Market Strategy

The Single Market Strategy is the European Commission's plan to unlock the full potential of the Single Market called the Internal Market by the Maastricht amendment. Efforts are already underway to improve companies' access to private finance through the Investment Plan and the Capital Market Union. The Commission is bringing forward proposals to create a European venture capital fund-of-funds supported by the EU budget and open to others to attract private capital. The Commission will also simplify VAT regulations, reduce the cost of company registration and put forward a proposal on insolvency to give a second chance to entrepreneurs who become insolvent.

Information on regulatory requirements can be accessible through a simple digital gateway. It has also been suggested for the Commission to push for high quality, online public services, to reduce the administrative burden and make Europe a more attractive destination for innovators. The Commission should also work on clear and SME-friendly intellectual property rules. The Commission should also take the final steps needed for the unitary patent to become an attractive and affordable way for European companies, including SMEs, to capitalize on their ideas.⁶⁹ Unitary Patents will make it possible to get patent protection in the EU Member States by submitting a single request to the EPO, making the procedure simpler and more cost effective for applicants.

The Commission wants to be able to take legislative and enforcement actions in order to ensure that consumers seeking to buy services or products in another EU country do not face differing prices, sales conditions or delivery options, unless this is justified by verifiable reasons. Without this the Internal Market cannot function properly. This applies to purchases both online and in person. The approach is similar to the geo-blocking initiative in the Digital Single Market Strategy and is part of the approach to further increase fairness in the Single Market.

To speed up investment and avoid protracted litigation, the Commission intends to help EU Member States with a voluntary, ex-ante assessment mechanism of the procurement aspects of certain large-scale infrastructure projects. The Commission seeks to promote networking between first instance review bodies and provide legal and technical assistance to the EU member states to set up fast and fair remedy bodies. The Commission and the Member States working together want to establish contract registers

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

covering the life cycle of contracts. This improves the transparency and the quality of national procurement systems, and support the development of a data analytics and anomaly-detection tool. The Commission supported by the Council also intends to push through the final steps to make the unitary patent a reality and clarify how it will interact with national patents and national supplementary protection certificates. As already announced in the Digital Single Market Strategy, the Commission will seek to review the enforcement of EU intellectual property rules (IPRs).⁷⁰

Despite the overall success of the Internal Market, significant obstacles remain for citizens and businesses to make the most of it. EU citizens interested in moving to another Member State and businesses wanting to sell products or provide services across borders still encounter problems. Currently, people and companies wanting to live, work or do business in another EU country find it difficult to find online the information they need to meet local requirements which remain different in each Member State and hence a daily reminder that the economic union is far from complete in practice. Even when existing national and EU services offer information and assistance, it is fragmented, incomplete and of uneven quality. Procedures that are online in some member states are not accessible to users from another member state. As a result, users cannot exercise their rights in the same way as locals.

Another reason why many of the opportunities offered by the Internal Market are not realized is caused by the lack of enforcement or implementation of EU law. In mid-2015, around 1,090 infringement proceedings were pending. Non-compliance weakens the Single Market's potential and lowers citizens' confidence in it. Enforcement of the Single Market includes national authorities ensuring that products are safe and compliant with the rules. There are still too many unsafe and non-compliant products sold in the EU market, which puts compliant businesses at a disadvantage and endangers consumers. In several areas, the principle of mutual recognition which ensures that goods that are lawfully marketed in one EU country enjoy the right to free movement and can be sold in another EU country, is not being applied. This prevents companies, especially SMEs, from selling their products elsewhere in the EU.⁷¹

The Commission with the support of the Council is taking important steps to encourage a culture of good governance, compliance and enforcement by improving services and assistance for citizens and businesses interested in grasping the opportunities available in the biggest market in the world. In May 2017, the Commission adopted a package of measures to make it easier for

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

people and companies wanting to work, live or do business in another EU country, and to help ensure that commonly agreed EU rules are respected.⁷²

The Commission adopted a proposal for a regulation to establish a Single Digital Gateway. This initiative will make it easier for anyone interested in living, working or doing business in another EU country to find information about rules, procedures and assistance services, and also access national procedures through one user-friendly interface in a language they can understand. Feedback on the service will be used to constantly improve it. This will save citizens and businesses considerable time and money. To this one can add the proposal for the Single Market Information Tool (SMIT), which will allow the Commission to obtain, in clearly framed cases, timely, comprehensive and reliable information from selected market players in specific instances, and as a last resort, where there are indications of serious difficulties with the application of EU Single Market legislation. The information is to be handled subject to strict confidentiality requirements.⁷³

Conclusion

It is difficult to gauge the legislative success of a presidency of the Council of the EU for EU legislation is not its sole domain but requires an equal input from both the European Commission and the European Parliament. More than this, it is not just a six-month effort but a continuous effort by all the three legislative institutions to achieve a better legal framework for the better functioning of the EU's Internal Market. From the above one can see that more or less, 2017 and the Maltese presidency for the first part of the year achieved a number of pre-established goals and progress was made in the legislative framework of the EU's Internal Market. Naturally, more progress is needed, but one can say that the main achievements towards the evolution of the EU Internal Market during 2017 and in particular during the six months of Malta's presidency of the EU Council of Ministers between January 2017 and June 2017 were satisfactory.

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⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

Government of Malta (2016) *2017 Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union Priorities* at <https://www.eu2017.mt/en/Documents/Maltese-Priorities.pdf>, p.2. (accessed on 20th December 2017).