

Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products

CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY STATEMENT: WORKSHOP ON EMC/EMI, 23-24 APRIL 2003

At its meeting of 24 April 2003, the Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products requested that the Chairman's¹ oral statement summarizing the outcome of Workshop on EMC/EMI, held on 23-24 April 2003 be made available in written form as a separate document in the Committee. Thus, please find below the statement the Chairman made on his own initiative at the formal Committee meeting on 24 April 2003.

"As many of you are aware, we held a workshop on EMC/EMI during the past day and a half. As this workshop has emanated from our work on the EMC/EMI pilot project in this formal Committee, I believe it would be prudent to give a brief overview of the workshop for the benefit of those that are present in this formal Committee meeting. The workshop was well-attended and we had very good presentations on the first day by a variety of regulators, giving their different approaches to regulating the EMC/EMI phenomenon. We had five regulators and the Secretariat who made presentations on the first day of the Workshop. For the second day, this morning, we had a panel discussion with four volunteers among the participants, who also made short presentations and stimulated the broader discussions, and we followed up the panel discussion with an open exchange of views on the next steps and possible conclusions to draw. As it was a very fruitful and information-packed day and a half, it will be difficult for me to provide a full overview. However I hope I can provide a few summary remarks. First, many participants were very grateful for the wealth of information presented. Secondly, it was noted that the actual regulations themselves were probably less the issue or less the barrier to be concerned about as there was much harmonization already. However, much of the problem remained with the administrative procedures, paperwork, timing, and costs associated with them. There were a number of suggestions on possible ways forward. It was suggested that the Committee could take small refined steps on moving the process forward by perhaps identifying products or areas that were of a low-risk tolerance in terms of health and safety etc., and try to apply a lightweight regulatory approach. I think the term that was used was "baby steps". If this was feasible and could be implemented, the group could learn from this experience and take the appropriate next steps. Secondly, a best-practice approach was suggested. By a best-practice approach, those who had experience with deregulation, post-market enforcement etc., could provide their experiences to others so that they could learn from it. Best-practice approach could also involve capacity-building. Thirdly and finally from my part, it was pointed out that there were different environments for each participant and that it may be too early to find a one-size-fits-all or one option for each and every participant. However, it was thought to be good to keep the matter under review and keep information on the issue updated. I will point out that as a part of the follow-up there were requests to have the presentations made available, and after having received permission from the speakers, the information is being placed on the WTO website so that all can easily access this

¹ Mr. Preben Gregersen, Chairman of the Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products, served as facilitator during the Workshop.

information. Also a participant list was drawn up and was made available just after the conclusion of this morning's session. There will be copies of this participant list in the room of this Committee's meeting this afternoon."
