



Turkey lifts requirement to submit "Certificate of Conformity for Imports" of alcoholic beverages

Following repeated requests from the European Commission to Turkey to improve the burdensome import licence requirements for imports of alcoholic beverages, on 22 February 2008, Turkey lifted the requirement for importers from the EU to submit a "Certificate of Conformity for Imports" issued by the Tobacco and Alcohol Board in order to import

Since June 2003, alcoholic beverage imports to Turkey have been required to obtain both a "Certificate of Conformity for imports" from the Tobacco and Alcohol Board (TABA) as well as a Control Certificate from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA). These burdensome dual import licensing requirements acted as a barrier to market access, which we considered to be contrary to the provisions of the Customs Union Decision and potentially GATT (1995) and the WTO Agreement on import licensing procedures.

The issue was raised by the Commission on many occasions bilaterally. It is also included as part of an opening benchmark in the Accession process chapter entitled "Free circulation of goods".

In the Turkish Official Gazette, number 26795, dated 22 February 2008, Turkey introduced the necessary amendments in the Regulation laying down the rules and procedures applied in the internal and external trade of alcoholic beverages, to lift the requirement to submit a Certificate of Conformity from the TABA in order to import, while replacing it with the requirement for a notification statement.

In consequence, it appears the situation will revert to the pre-2003 situation and importers will henceforth only have to obtain a single import certificate from the MARA.

While this is clearly a step in the right direction and will ease import procedures for imports from the EU, the situation will have to be monitored closely and we will continue to encourage Turkey to remove all import licensing requirements for imports of alcoholic beverages from the EU.

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