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PRESS RELEASE

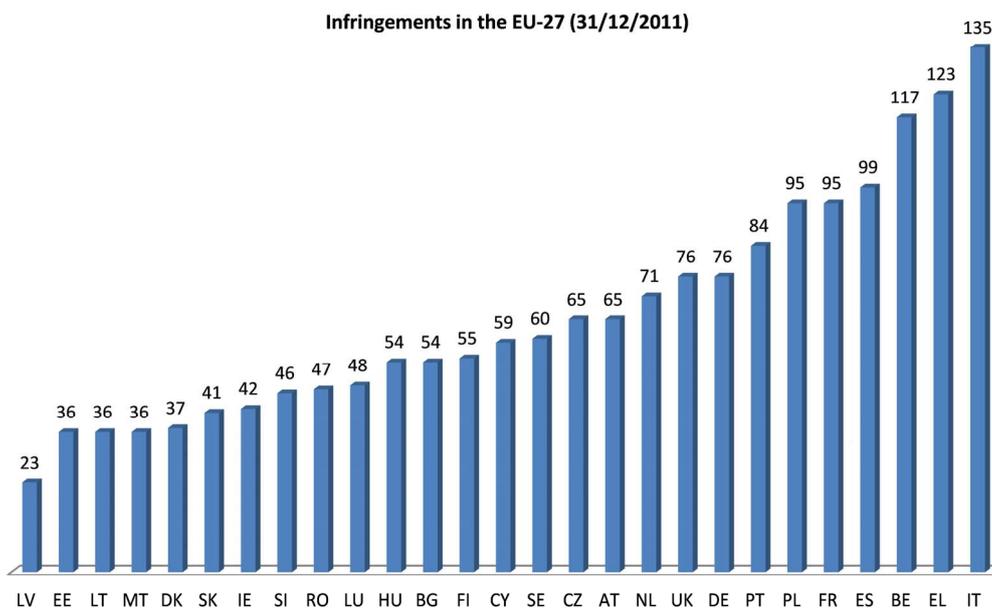
Brussels, 30 November 2012

Better compliance with EU law in 2011, but implementation still too slow

Member States' performance in applying EU law last year is detailed in the 29th Annual Report on Monitoring the Application of EU Law, published by the Commission today. Although there were fewer infringements in 2011 compared to previous years, the number of cases remained high and problematic in certain Member States and in specific policy areas.

At the end of 2011, the number of open infringement procedures was down by 15% compared to the previous year (1775 compared to 2100). This is partly due to the increased use of problem solving mechanisms (such as EU Pilot, SOLVIT) by Member States, which allowed matters to be resolved without needing to open formal legal proceedings.

Environment, transport, internal market & services, and taxation were the four most infringement-prone policy areas, together representing 60% of all cases. The Member States with the greatest number of infringement procedures open against them were Italy (135), Greece (123) and Belgium (117). As in 2010, Latvia was the best performer with only 23 cases, followed by Estonia, Lithuania and Malta (36 procedures each). The EU-27 ranking is as follows:



Fines to curb increasingly late implementation of Directives

As in previous years, Member States' late implementation of Directives has not improved. By the end of 2011, 62% more infringements were open because of late implementation than in the 12 months before. The Member States with the most late implementation infringements against them were Poland (46), the Czech Republic (41) and Belgium (40), while Ireland (11), Latvia (12) and Denmark (13) have the best performance in that regard.

In order to deter late implementation, the Commission has made full use of the sanctions system introduced under the Lisbon Treaty. It has referred 9 cases to the EU's Court of Justice with a request for financial penalties (against Austria, Germany (3 cases), Greece, Italy and Poland (3 cases)).

Complaints: vital feedback from the public

Citizens, businesses and stakeholders continued to provide important input into the Commission's monitoring of the correct application of EU rules. In 2011, 3115 registered complaints were received from the public. Citizen complaints were most frequent with regard to environmental, internal market (for example, freedom of services and mutual recognition of professional qualifications) and fundamental freedoms laws, and were made most against Italy (386), Spain (306) and Germany (263).

EU Pilot was used to follow-up on, and find solutions to, many complaints in a short period of time, avoiding lengthy legal proceedings and related costs. With the participation of Luxembourg and Malta, the all 27 Member States have now signed up for EU Pilot.

Infringement profiles: Member States and EU policies

The annexes to the Report look at performance of each Member State and the performance in specific policy areas. They provide illustrative cases and highlight key issues in the application of EU law.

The full Annual Report is available under:

http://www.ec.europa.eu/eu_law/infringements/infringements_annual_report_29_en.htm

Background

The Commission has presented an Annual Report on Monitoring the Application of EU Law every year since 1984, following a request from the European Parliament.

The European Parliament adopts, every year, a report on the Commission report, explaining its position on the main issues.

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