

**NOTICE TO IMPORTERS****Imports into the Community of products from Montenegro**

(2006/C 297/05)

By a notice to importers published in *Official Journal* No C 14 of 20.1.2004, page 2, the Commission informed operators presenting documentary evidence of origin with a view to securing preferential treatment for all products imported from Serbia and Montenegro to take all the necessary precautions, since the release of the goods in question for free circulation may give rise to a customs debt. The notice was based on the existence of doubts that products imported from Serbia and Montenegro under the preferential arrangements were actually and properly subject to the verification of their originating status as required by Community law. The notice did not apply to Kosovo as defined by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999.

Council Regulation (EC) 1946/2005 of 14 November 2005 amending Regulation (EC) No 2007/2000 introducing exceptional trade measures for countries and territories participating in or linked to the European Union's Stabilisation and Association process, introduced, as of 1.1.2006, three separate origins in relation to the autonomous trade measures in line with the three separate customs territories: 'Serbia' origin, 'Montenegro' origin and 'Kosovo' origin. This distinction remains valid following the decision on the independence of Montenegro last May.

The main findings of the monitoring mission conducted by the Commission's services in Serbia and in Montenegro indicate that in Serbia the necessary elements are in place for the customs administration to properly manage and control the preferential arrangements when exporting the products to the Community as well as to other Balkan countries. In relation to Montenegro, however, some improvements are still needed concerning the legal aspects and the practice when performing controls on origin.

The conditions for a proper functioning of the preferential arrangements having thus been restored in the case of Serbia, the notice to importers concerning imports into the Community of products from Serbia and Montenegro shall be withdrawn with regard to Serbia but maintained with regard to imports into the Community of all products from Montenegro. The notice does not apply to Kosovo as defined by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999.

Therefore, Community operators presenting documentary evidence of origin with a view to securing preferential treatment for all products imported from Montenegro are advised to take all the necessary precautions, since the release of the goods in question for free circulation may give rise to a customs debt.

This notice replaces the one published in *Official Journal* No C 14 of 20.1.2004, page 2.

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