

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2008

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U.S. COMMERCE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCES ISOTOPE TRACKING PARTNERSHIP WITH EUROPEAN UNION

WASHINGTON – U.S. Commerce Deputy Under Secretary for International Trade Michelle O’Neill today announced the first phase of a U.S.-European Commission (EC) pilot project to track shipments of radioactive isotopes before the Transatlantic Symposium on the Societal Benefits of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID). The radioactive isotopes used in this pilot project improve the effectiveness of medical diagnostics, such as x-ray examinations, that can help save patient’s lives.

“This new partnership will help pave the way for other projects to increase the competitiveness of businesses on both sides of the Atlantic,” said O’Neill. “Improved RFID shipping will help our healthcare workers and researchers stay on the cutting edge of medical innovation.”

O’Neill discussed the pilot project before more than 150 public and private-sector representatives from the United States and Europe. U.S. and EU officials also announced U.S.-EC endorsement of Policy Guidance on RFID developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to promote best practices on RFID. Participants agreed to focus future U.S.-European Union (EU) attention on creating an innovative, unified technical and policy environment for RFID that respects the needs of all stakeholders.

The RFID pilot project is a result of the U.S.-EU framework for Advancing Transatlantic Economic Integration. The initial phase of the project will begin in 2009, involving laboratories and postal authorities in the United States and the United Kingdom, with other participants pending. The second phase of the project will begin in 2010, expanding the project to other EU countries.

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