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Japan

Trade Policy Monitoring

Japan Considers Mandatory Public Comment

2004

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Report Highlights:

The Japanese Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications will commission a task force to evaluate development and implementation of a government-wide system of public comment, according to the Nihon Keizai Shinbun.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
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The Japanese Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications will commission a task force to evaluate development and implementation of a government-wide system of public comment, according to the Nihon Keizai Shinbun (17 Feb 2004). The Nihon Keizai Shinbun is Japan's leading business daily.

Objectives

The task force would look at developing a legislative framework to make the current system of public comments on regulations mandatory. The framework would seek to increase government transparency and responsiveness to public comments and include extending the average period for public comment to 30 days. The bill would be submitted at the next ordinary session of Japanese Diet (national legislature), which will convene in January 2005, for full deliberations.

Task Force Composition

The task force is scheduled to be commissioned in March, would be chaired by Hiroshi Shiono, professor emeritus of Tokyo University, and would include academics, government administrators, and industry experts.

Current System of Public Comment

The first government-wide framework for public comment was implemented as a guideline in 1999. Despite an aggressive coordinated cabinet agreement, called an "action guideline" on how ministries would implement the guideline, the various ministries have implemented it differently, and implementation remains voluntary. A recent audit revealed that, out of 399 cases involving public comment on laws in 2002, less than 15% (58 cases) reflected feedback from the public, and 2% (6 cases) ministries failed to seek public comments. The audit also revealed that the average time for public comment is currently 14 days or less.

End of Report.