Single market for Europeans

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The Internal Market and Consumer Protection adopted the own-initiative report by António Fernando CORREIA DE CAMPOS (S&D, PT) on a Single Market for Europeans. It welcomes the Commission Communication entitled ‘Towards a Single Market Act -50 proposals for improving our work, business and exchanges with one another’.

Members consider that the Communication's proposals are generally in line with Parliament’s expectations, but need to be further strengthened in order for citizens to be at the heart of the Single Market project.

The committee takes the view that Europeans have not yet fully exploited the potential of the Single Market in many areas, including the free movement of persons, goods and services, and that new incentives are needed in particular to ensure effective geographical labour mobility across Europe. The Single Market strategy should strengthen social welfare and workers' rights and ensure fair working conditions for all Europeans.

Members consider that efforts to complete the Single Market need to concentrate on the concerns and rights of citizens, consumers , public service users and businesses and bring them tangible benefits in order to restore their full confidence in the Single Market and make them more aware of the opportunities it offers. They urge Member States and the Commission to join forces to put the Single Market message across to citizens and to ensure that its benefits are recognised.

The report stresses that the Single Market for Europeans is primarily about jobs and creating new jobs. The 19 actions proposed by the Commission should be prioritised according to their impact on job creation and their delivery of tangible benefits as well as their feasibility for European citizens in a realistic period of time.

Members recall also that Parliament called for greater recognition for social economy enterprises, including the generalised integration of the concept into EU policies.

The Commission is asked to endorse the following list of proposals as key Parliament priorities:

- adopt a clear and readily accessible ‘Citizens’ Charter’ on the right to live and work anywhere in the EU, and to develop targeted, multilingual information about the everyday problems that citizens encounter when moving, shopping or selling across Europe and the social, health, consumer protection and environmental protection standards on which they can rely;
- take measures to increase the mobility of European citizens, in particular by publishing by September 2011 a Green Paper on the recognition of professional qualifications, including an assessment of the existing framework, and, if appropriate, to propose a legislative initiative to reform this framework in 2012, at the same time assessing the feasibility and the added value of EU wide professional identity cards and a ‘European skills passport’ in 2011 and setting up a ‘mobility scoreboard’ to measure mobility within the EU;
- play a more active role in coordinating the activities of national market surveillance and customs authorities, in order to improve the effectiveness of border controls on goods imported from third countries, and to draw up in 2011 a multiannual action plan for the development of an effectiv
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ask the Member States which are still imposing restrictions on their labour markets to review their transitional provisions in order to open up their labour markets to all European workers;

- present put forward practical proposals to extend consumer protection against unfair commercial practices to small businesses;
- sponsor a European skills exchange whereby small and medium sized enterprises can benefit from the skills available in larger enterprises;
- propose an extension of the existing roaming regulation both in time to June 2015 - and in scope, introducing retail price caps for data roaming;
- submit by June 2011 a legislative proposal on guaranteeing access to certain basic banking services and to improve the transparency and comparability of bank charges by the end of 2011;
- eliminate the tax obstacles still faced by European citizens, with stronger action to prevent double taxation of European citizens;
- come up with a legislative proposal to remove obstacles encountered by mobile workers in order to ensure the full portability of pension rights;
- clarify the criteria governing the compatibility of state aid and public procurement in connection with social services of general interest (SSGI) with the internal market.

Lastly, Members
call for measures to create an appropriate legal framework for foundations, mutual societies and associations so as to give them European status, to prevent legal uncertainty.