Single market for Europeans

2010/2278(INI) - 06/04/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 600 votes to 48, with 27 abstentions, a resolution on a Single Market for Europeans in response to 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.

Parliament 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 resolution 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 (foundations, mutual societies and associations), 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 effective **European market surveillance system for all products**, while allowing Member States flexibility in fulfilling their legal obligations;

- 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.

An amendment adopted in plenary calls on the Commission to ensure that all social rights are respected and that a reference to social policies and rights in single market legislation should be included, where justified in the light of the conclusions of an assessment of the social impact of proposed legislation.

Another amendment calls on the Commission and the Member States, on the basis of their respective competences, to **ensure that services of general economic interest (SGEI), including social services of general interest (SSGI), are secured** within a framework of universal access, high quality, affordability and clear financing rules by providing public authorities with a 'tool-kit' to evaluate the quality of such services.

Lastly, emphasising the **lack of direct communication with citizens**, Parliament considers that the EU representations in the Member States must be mandated to respond immediately to negative and misleading reports in the media by presenting the facts, and should make further efforts to provide information on European legislation, projects and programmes, thereby also promoting informed debate on European issues.