

20 main concerns of European citizens and business with the functioning of the single market

2012/2044(INI) - 11/10/2012 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection adopted the own-initiative report by Regina BASTOS (EPP, PT) on the 20 main concerns of European citizens and business with the functioning of the Single Market in response to the Commission working document entitled ‘Single Market through the lens of the people: a snapshot of citizens’ and businesses’ 20 main concerns’ which followed [Parliament’s resolution of 20 May 2010 on a single market at the service of consumers and citizens](#).

It notes that **there are still too many obstacles** preventing Europeans from taking full advantage of the existence of the single market, thus hindering the development of a sense of belonging to the same community, and that there is an urgent need to resolve these difficulties in order to allow Europeans to benefit fully from their right to freedom of movement and the advantages resulting from membership of the EU.

Members call on the Commission to present **concrete actions and feasible proposals to resolve the issues identified as the 20 main concerns of the citizens**, stating that, in this time of severe financial crisis, the EU needs to step up its efforts to eliminate barriers to the smooth functioning of the single market, in particular in sectors which can act as motors for sustainable growth, such as crossborder business and entrepreneurial activities, service provision, mobility, access to finance and financial literacy.

The report highlights several issues

Vehicle registration: Members note that Parliament receives numerous complaints from citizens faced with cumbersome formalities, very often relating to the re-registration of their vehicles in another Member State and the associated additional costs. They call for: (i) full implementation of the principles of EU law on the registration of cars in other Member States, (ii) a legislative proposal on the roadworthiness testing of motor vehicles, with a view to reducing the administrative burden for citizens and industry; (iii) the mutual recognition of technical controls between Member States; (iv) the establishment of a European database to centralise the technical data of all vehicles, in order to enable Europe-wide comparability and facilitate cross border vehicle registration; (v) minimising the financial cost to the public of registering vehicles in another Member State, by avoiding unnecessary costs through a common approach.

Professional qualifications: the committee recognises that increased mobility of qualified labour can contribute to making Europe more competitive and to this, feels it is necessary to **adopt a modern framework for the recognition of professional qualifications**, by making use of the Internal Market Information System (IMI) alert mechanism. It welcomes the introduction of a European Professional Card supported by the Internal Market Information System, and, highlighting the success of the automatic recognition procedure contained in Directive 2005/36/EC, calls for an assessment to be made of the possibility of extending it to more professions.

Bank accounts: Members note that European citizens have found banks imposing a range of impediments and complex and discriminatory demands when they want to open a bank account, with the result that 30 million European citizens have no bank account and mobility is thus impeded. They stress that all EU citizens who do not already hold a bank account in the Member State where they have lodged a request for one should have **access to basic banking services**, and they call on the Commission to make a legislative proposal to ensure consumer-friendly procedures for opening bank accounts across the Union.

Governance: the committee reaffirms the need to strengthen cooperation and interaction between Parliament, the Council, the Commission and Member States, so that citizens feel more included in the main projects and day-to-day activities of the EU and so that EU action, where deemed necessary, is targeted and useful. Furthermore, dialogue with civil society is essential to restore confidence in the single market. Members call on the Commission to:

- develop the ‘Your Europe’ portal in order to turn it into a genuine digital ‘one-stop shop’ providing citizens and businesses with information about the single market;
- make every effort to deliver a single, **live online point of contact** for citizens and consumers, via its offices in each Member State;
- analyse the **involvement of local and regional authorities** in the strategy for expanding the Single Market Information System;
- improve the ‘**SME test**’ so as to ensure that it is applied consistently and coherently across all relevant policy areas and is incorporated into the overall assessment of proposals.

Information and communication: the report emphasises that there is a lack of information about the single market, which often means that citizens and enterprises do not know or do not understand their rights and obligations, and do not know how to obtain the required answers or assistance. It calls on the Commission to make use of all available technological resources in order to **launch a dialogue with the citizens on the single market**, by organising interactive information campaigns, prioritising the 20 main concerns, informing citizens and enterprises concerning the benefits of the Single Market, practical and concrete solutions to their day-to-day problems, and their rights, and encouraging them to participate in the creation of a competitive, fair and balanced market, while also paying special attention to strengthening the Points of Single Contact (PSCs). Members go on to make a series of recommendations on the provision of information on energy bills, the development of a single digital market, and right the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC).

- **Legislation/Transposition:** the report recognises that although the number of **infringement proceedings** initiated by the Commission has decreased, there were still about 2 100 such proceedings under way at the end of 2010. It notes the large number of **petitions** received by Parliament’s Committee on Petitions relating to the problems citizens face within the internal market, particularly as regards the incorrect transposition or implementation of EU law. Member States are asked to prioritise the correct and timely transposition of legislation relating to the Single Market and to reduce levels of non-compliance. Members invite them to implement a ‘**Single Market test**’ within the framework of their national legislation. Members make a series of recommendations on implementation and particularly call on the Commission to apply zero tolerance to any discriminatory rules and practices by Member States in the field of employment which run counter to EU law, and to initiate appropriate proceedings without delay in the event of non-compliance.

Lastly, Members make a series of recommendations to the Commission to:

- monitor the 20 main concerns of citizens and businesses in relation to the Single Market’ after two years, and to update them, drawing up a table for each of the concerns highlighted, indicating which actors are responsible for solutions to each of the root causes identified;
- focus information campaigns during the European Year of Citizens 2013 on the areas of those concerns that relate to rights based on EU citizenship, since these, on the basis of the selection methodology of the report, truly reflect what matters most to EU citizens in their everyday lives in the internal market;
- find ways of amalgamating the EU Citizenship Report with the report entitled ‘The Single Market through the lens of the people’ in future, so as to avoid duplication and confusion and guard against the risk of decoupling problems from solutions;
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ensure that existing tools such as SOLVIT, the Internal Market Scoreboard, Internal Market Information System, 'Your Europe Advice' and 'Your Europe' are effectively interconnected so as to make it possible to monitor the proper and timely transposition of EU directives.