

Consumer programme 2014-2020

2011/0340(COD) - 14/01/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 630 votes to 42, with 12 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a “Consumer” Programme 2014-2020.

Parliament adopted its position in first reading following the ordinary legislative procedure. The amendments adopted in plenary are the result of an agreement between Parliament and Council. They amend the proposal as follows:

General objective: the general objective of the Programme is to ensure a high level of consumer protection, to empower consumers and to place the consumer at the heart of the internal market, within the framework of an overall strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The Programme will do so by contributing to:

- protecting the health, safety and the legal and economic interests of consumers,
- promoting their right to information, education and to organise themselves in order to safeguard their interests, and supporting the integration of consumer interests into other policy areas.

Budget: the financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme for the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2020 shall be **EUR 188 829 000**.

The resolution proposes to set a ceiling of **12%** of the total amount allocated to cover the expenses pertaining to preparatory, monitoring, control, audit and evaluation activities and for technical and administrative assistance.

Content of eligible actions, by objective: amendments have been made to the main objectives of the programme:

- **Objective II: Consumer information and education, and support to consumer organisations :**
- The actions should seek to: (i) build and improve access to the evidence base for policy-making in areas affecting consumers, for designing smart and targeted regulations and for detecting any market malfunctioning or changes in consumers' needs, providing a basis for the development of consumer policy, for the identification of the areas most problematic for consumers and for the integration of consumer interests into other Union policies; (ii) support through **financing of Union-level consumer organisations and through capacity building for consumer organisations at Union, national and regional level**; (iii) enhance the transparency of consumer markets and consumer information, ensuring consumers have **comparable, reliable and easily accessible data**; (iv) enhance consumer education as a life-long process with a particular focus on vulnerable consumers.
- **Objective III: Rights and redress:** the aim here is to facilitate access to dispute resolution mechanisms for consumers, in particular to alternative dispute resolution schemes, including through a Union-wide online system and the networking of national alternative dispute resolution entities, paying specific attention to **adequate measures for vulnerable consumers' needs and rights**.

Grants: additional clarifications have been made to define the categories of potential beneficiaries eligible for grants. Grants should be awarded:

- to national authorities of the Member State holding the Presidency of Council configurations, other than that of Foreign Affairs or to bodies designated by that Member State for the organisation of Presidency events concerning consumer policy of the Union;
- for action to Member States' authorities responsible for consumer affairs and to corresponding authorities of third countries to authorities notified to the Commission, or to non-profit-making bodies expressly designated by those authorities for that purpose;
- for action to a body designated by a Member State or a third country which is a non-profit-making body selected through a transparent procedure or a public body . The designated body shall be part of a Union network.

Ceilings of certain grants: amendments have been made to the ceilings of some grants as well as clarifications on the scope of actions considered as of **exceptional utility**.

Adoption of the annual report: in order to ensure uniform conditions for the implementation of this Regulation, implementing powers should be conferred on the Commission in respect of the adoption of annual work programmes. Given that the Programme does not set out criteria for the safety of products but aims at providing financial support to tools for the implementation of product safety policy, and given the relatively small amount concerned, it is appropriate that **the advisory procedure apply**.

Delegated acts: the power to adopt acts should be delegated to the Commission in respect of the adaptation of the indicators set out in Annex II in order to take into account changes in the legislative framework in the area of consumer protection, and in respect of amending Annex I by **removing specific actions concerned** in order to take into account the results of an evaluation report by the Commission.

Evaluation and dissemination: the Commission should by 30 September 2017 review the achievement of the objectives of all the measures (at the level of results and impacts), the state of play regarding the implementation of the eligible actions. The report should be submitted to the European Parliament and the Council.

For the purposes of taking into account the situation whereby the evaluation report concludes that the specific actions set out in Annex I have not been implemented by 31 December 2016 and cannot be implemented by the end of the Programme, including when those specific actions are no longer relevant for the achievement of the objectives, the Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts to amend Annex I **by removing the specific actions concerned**. By 31 December 2017, if appropriate, the Commission shall submit a legislative proposal or, subject to the conditions laid down in the proposal, adopt a delegated act.