Resolution on the 30th anniversary of the single market: celebrating achievements and looking towards future developments

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The European Parliament adopted by 537 votes to 35, with 66 abstentions, a resolution on the 30th anniversary of the single market: celebrating achievements and looking towards future developments.

30 years ago, a joint vision, common efforts and determination by the European institutions and Member States working closely with European consumers, businesses, workers and civil society led to the creation of the EU single market, protecting social standards, thus marking a major step in the history of European integration and its ever-closer cross-border cooperation.

The single market is today the world's largest internal market, accounting for 56 million European jobs and generating 25 % of EU gross domestic product (GDP) and has developed high standards of consumer protection.

However, after three decades, the single market continues to face changes. The recent supply shortages deriving from multiple crises underline the need to make the single market an instrument that strengthens the EU's resilience and to speed up the transition to a fully circular economy by 2050.

Current challenges

The single market is the engine of European integration and the backbone of its economy which cannot be taken for granted. Current challenges include long-term geopolitical issues and their effects on global economy and trade, to climate change, and to the challenges within the EU and in its neighbourhood. Brexit, Covid-19 and Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine have all put the resilience of the single market to the test. However, the resolution stresses that the single market proved to be one of Europe's most important tools with which to respond to the crisis through cooperation and that the Single Market Emergency Instrument (SMEI) should be central to ensuring such coordination so as to prevent shortages and ensure the smooth functioning of the single market, including the free movement of essential goods and services throughout the EU.

The resolution underlines the need to assess and manage the **EU's strategic dependency** on countries outside the bloc in a number of critical areas, including by increasing the reuse or recycling of products, and remains committed to delivering an ambitious legislative framework on batteries and semiconductors, as well as to advancing European standardisation and the SMEI as important factors in ensuring the EU's security of supply, crisis management and resilience.

Updating the single market

According to Parliament, the best way to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the single market is to update it to renew its promise to deliver benefits for consumers and businesses as well as taking into account environmental and social considerations. The Commission is called on to look at new **digital opportunities and trends**, including virtual worlds, to make sure the single market continues to function properly and that consumers are well protected.

Members advocate strengthening further the external dimension of the single market and preserving the EU's interests and its strategic independence.

Moreover, consumer protection also needs to be updated, in a way that also takes digital asymmetries into account, in order to cover the digital services sector, such as gaming, virtual reality, augmented reality and virtual worlds; stresses the importance of fostering innovation and new businesses. The Single Market Scoreboard should also be updated.

Effective enforcement

The resolution underlines the importance of effective, timely and correct application and enforcement of the single market regulatory framework. This requires close cooperation between the Commission and Member States, full commitment of national authorities responsible for the proper application and enforcement of the law, better cooperation between customs and market surveillance authorities and greater involvement of stakeholders such as consumer organisations and other public organisations, as well as businesses.

Members stress that proper enforcement and compliance with single market rules is crucial to building consumer trust and confidence, as well as to creating a level playing field for all businesses, including those from countries outside the EU selling products and services in the single market, with a particular focus on the market surveillance framework, product safety and mutual recognition.

Parliament highlights that for a functioning customs union, national obstacles need to be removed to prevent harmful traffic of goods and protect the EU Single Market from illegal products. In this regard, it calls on Commission to set up an EU customs agency. Parliament also advocates strengthening the **funding of single market policies** by updating the current multiannual financial framework.

Strengthened single market

Parliament believes that the EU will only be able to make the most of its economic power if the single market receives renewed commitment from the Member States and EU institutions. It considers that, to succeed, strong political will is needed, as well as a new overarching programme with an agenda for action towards 2030 and beyond.

According to Members, strengthening and developing the single market requires a broader strategy strengthening the single market for services, as well as a **real digital single market** in which data can flow freely within the EU and across sectors to the benefit of businesses, researchers and public administrations, in compliance with privacy and data protection rules.

The resolution stresses that in order to foster resilience, ensure security of supply, reach the Union's connectivity goals and promote open strategic autonomy in key sectors, the Commission and Member States should work towards creating a true single market for energy and for telecommunications services, with strong engagement and protection of consumers, as soon as possible. It also notes that the **new legislative framework for products** has been a success for product regulation in Europe for decades but that it needs to be updated in the light of technological developments and the digital and circular economy.