

Consumer protection: indication of prices of products offered to consumers

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The rapporteur firstly explained why the proposal on price indication had taken such a long time to arrive at a clear system of price comparison which was in consumers' interests. Mrs Oomen-Ruijten then cited the main exemptions which Member States were free to apply to the system; the amendments tabled included, in particular, goods sold in vending machines and by itinerant traders and also food sold in hotels, restaurants, canteens, theatres, cinemas and so on. As regards the protection afforded to small retailers, the rapporteur pointed out the transitional provision which deferred, just for them, the application of the new price display regime. In addition, at small points of sale, the price could also be indicated in a price list visibly displayed in the premises. Finally, the speaker stated that, during the transitional period following the introduction of the single currency, the regime in question would be further amended to allow the selling price and unit price to also be expressed in the single currency. Commissioner Flynn stated that the Commission was prepared to accept most of the amendments. However, it could not accept Nos 9, 15 and 16 on the system of dual pricing in national currencies and euros, after the latter's launch, as it seemed too early to lay down such detailed rules on the measures accompanying the single currency which would be the subject of a global presentation at the due time. Likewise, the Commission could not accept Amendments Nos 23 and 24, because they laid down detailed rules on price indication and encroached on the competence of Member States. or Amendment No 25 which contradicted another amendment (No 6) which had been accepted. Finally, Mr Flynn stated that the Commission agreed with the interpretation that the exemptions included in Amendment No 13 could be extended to antique dealers.