Consumers: general framework for Community activities 1999-2003

1998/0028(COD) - 23/08/2001 - Follow-up document

This Interim Report provides an overview of the state of implementation within each of the broad policy domains identified in the Action Plan. The last two years have seen many changes, political, organisational and operational, affecting the development of consumer policy at the level of the European Community. However, as can be seen from this Interim Report, these changes have generally not had a detrimental effect on the implementation of the Action Plan. Indeed, the overall situation shows not only that progress has been made in the traditional areas of consumer policy, but that the Commission has also been active in safeguarding consumers' interests in new areas such as the Internet in general and electronic commerce in particular. In broad terms, the last few years have certainly been years of transition, with consumer policy moving to centre stage. The increased political priority that is being given to consumer affairs at the European level does, however, mean that greater public attention will be focussed on the policy development process. Attention should, therefore, be increasingly turned to consolidating the recent upgrading of EC consumer policy. Looking forward to the next Action Plan, this would imply that the Commission's central objective should be to ensure that future proposals for consumer policy and related activities are built on a strong foundation, flow from a coherent strategic framework, benefit from a wide-ranging and transparent consultation process, and are subject to a rigorous system of monitoring and impact assessment.