

Protection of consumers: general product safety (rev. Directive 92/59/EEC)

2000/0073(COD) - 06/06/2003 - Follow-up document

The Commission has presented its report in accordance with Article 20 of Directive 2001/95/EC (General Product Safety) to "identify the needs, possibilities and priorities for Community action on the safety of services". It has been prepared in the light of wide consultations with the Member States and stakeholders and is based on a preliminary identification and qualitative assessment of the most relevant policy options. In line with the outcome of the consultation the Commission is of the opinion that the aim of Community action on service safety could be: - to support the national policies and measures in order to contribute to their effectiveness and efficiency; - to ensure that consumers can rely upon a consistent, high level of safety protection throughout the EU; - to facilitate the information on the cross-border provision of services or the establishment of subsidiaries of service providers. A number of options for substantive action on safety of services have, therefore, been considered in order to assess the extent to which they might be justified in the light of these objectives. However, the inadequacy of the available data and the lack of evidence of specific internal market difficulties make it difficult to justify any specific option for substantive Community action at this stage. The importance of services in the EU economy, the cross-border relevance of safety aspects of services related to tourism and sports and leisure activities as well as the expectations often expressed by EU citizens for a high level of safety throughout the EU, lead to the conclusion that initiatives at Community level should be considered in order to support the policies and measures of the Member States. It therefore seems that the immediate priority should be to improve the present knowledge base and to monitor systematically the policies and measures of the Member States. In order to improve the knowledge base and to be in a position to set up, if necessary, European standards supporting national policies, a suitable framework should be put in place. Such a legislative framework would aim at monitoring and supporting national policies and measures by: - establishing a procedure for exchange of information on policy and regulatory developments and the results achieved and administrative co-operation between the authorities, taking into account the scope of relevant existing and forthcoming Community legislation on the provision of information in the field of technical standards and regulations related to services; - setting provisions for the systematic collection and assessment of data on risks of services and the establishment of an EU database; - aiming at the establishment of procedures for setting European standards, if and when the evidence indicates a need, to work in conjunction with broadly defined objectives related to the safety of services. The framework will be designed in the light of careful assessment of potential benefits and burdens, with particular focus on the situation of small and medium-sized enterprises, and in close co-operation with the Member States. The objective will be to define the optimal scope and methods for monitoring and data collection, in order to ensure a genuine added value in a cost-effective manner. It would be appropriate to focus on the sectors most relevant for consumers in a cross-border perspective, for example mass-accommodation services like hotels, camping or other tourist facilities as well as related sports and leisure activities.