Internal market: strategy over the next five years

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The committee adopted the report by its chair, Ana PALACIO VALLELERSUNDI (EPP/ED, E), giving strong backing to the Commission's proposed five-year strategy for improving the internal market. The committee broadly supported both the method and the objectives laid down by the Commission. It particularly welcomed the Commission's choice of a working method based on precise target actions with agreed deadlines, which could be reviewed and if necessary adjusted. The report urged the Commission to put greater emphasis on monitoring Member States' progress in implementing single market rules. It also made a number of recommendations aimed at cutting red tape and improving dialogue with business. Lastly, the report put forward various proposals on electronic commerce. It called in particular for work on the simplification of the VAT system and its application to e-commerce to be speeded up. The Commission was also urged to make rapid progress on the creation of a European network of alternative dispute-resolution systems, in particular for online transactions, which would provide consumers with a real chance of obtaining legal redress. This was crucial in order to increase consumer confidence in e-commerce while not deterring small businesses from opening internet trading sites.