Internal market: 3rd 2002 review.

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The committee adopted the report by Malcolm HARBOUR (EPP-ED, UK) on the Commission·s third review of the internal market strategy. The report issued a clear call for the internal market to be completed quicker to boost economic development and create new jobs. In particular, the committee said that completion of the internal market in services should be a top priority at the 2003 Economic Summit. MEPs pointed out that, while the internal market had so far been an outstanding success, progress in recent years had been below target. Barriers in the services market persisted and restrictions on free movement remained. This was largely due to national, regional and local regulations but Member States were also to blame for poor implementation of internal market laws. The report noted that the latest scoreboard showed that 2.1% of legislation had not been properly enacted and that two of the largest economies, France and Germany, were furthest away from the target. The committee therefore concluded that Member States should not only speed up internal market laws but also report to the Commission at each Economic Summit on their shortcomings in this area, while the Commission itself should investigate the causes of such failings. The Council of Ministers was not spared either, with MEPs urging it to speed up the passage of the Sales Promotion Regulation and conclude the negotiations on the Community Patent. In relation to the possible evolution of an internal market for health services, the comittee looked forward to the outcome of the high level process of reflection on patient mobility and healthcare developments, due to be completed in 2003. Lastly, the committee decided that, while the principles of mutual recognition and "country of origin" were essential for the completion of the internal market in goods and services, there was also a need to safeguard public interest objectives, especially consumer protection, through the harmonisation of national rules "where appropriate".