Single market: report 1995

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OBJECTIVE: The report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament provides an overall assessment of the operation of the single market in 1995. SUBSTANCE: the Commission stresses that completion of the single market is of central importance for the Union, given its potential to contribute to European growth and job creation. In 1995 a growing awareness emerged of the single market's essential role in paving the way for economic and monetary union, strengthening European industry's competitiveness and stimulating economic growth on the basis of sustainable development. In 1995 the Commission's policy was organized along six lines of action, designed to give a fresh impetus to the single market: 1. completing and streamlining the legislative framework of the single market; 2. making the single market work; 3. confirming the single market as the cornerstone of economic and monetary union; 4. securing a single market for the general public; 5. adapting the single market to technological change; 6. preparing the single market for enlargement. Progress has been made in the six areas in question but there is still plenty left to do: even if, in overall terms, the single market works, there are still problems in certain specific areas. Concern persists with particular regard to continuing technical hindrances to trade, legislative gaps in sectors such as taxation and company law, the uneven application of legislation, the need to strengthen competition policy, particularly in the area of State aid and the liberalization of public services, and the calls for compensatory measures as a result of monetary fluctuations. Furthermore, the single market is not sufficiently geared to the needs of the general public. In 1996 the Commission will submit a more comprehensive analysis of the effects and the efficiency of the internal market since it was established. Be that as it may, the priorities for the future are clear. The main aim is to complete the single market for the general public, improve the efficiency of the single market for businesses, particularly SMUs, complete the liberalization of the gas and electricity markets and of telecommunications, prepare for the information society, speed up work on the trans-European networks and help the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to adjust to the requirements of the single market. A further challenge should also be added to this list: that of simplifying the rules imposed on businesses and private individuals in order to create a genuine single economic and civic area without internal frontiers. The rules should be fewer but better at all levels: local, regional, national and Community.