Single market, 2nd scoreboard, May 1998: progress of the action plan SMAP

1998/2111(COS) - 18/05/1998 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: to provide a summary balance sheet of the state of progress of the single market with regard to the 1997 Single Market Action Plan. SUBSTANCE: This Commission working document, which takes the place of the annual report on the single market, summarises the state of progress in implementing the single market. It is presented in the form of a scoreboard or summary of statistics and indicators on completion of the single market. It also indicates progress made in fulfilling commitments made by the Member States and the Commission under the Single Market Action Plan (COS0555). The document states that of the 62 commitments entered into by the Commission, Member States and Parliament, only 23 have been met. These include the landmark agreement on the 'tax package' (December 1997) and the political adoption of three of the four measures designated in the Action Plan as priorities (biotechnology, gas liberalisation and transparency mechanism for services). The Commission has taken important steps to modernise competition rules and advance the process of regulatory simplification. It has also presented new proposals on copyright, conditional access services, late payments and public procurement. The document indicates that considerable delays are accumulating with regard to transposition of Community legislation in the Member States. However, since publication of the first scoreboard many of them have upgraded their performance (the rate of transposition is now more than 80% in 1998 compared with 76% in 1997) and the average delay in transposition has reduced from 17 to 15 months. There seems to have been a slight shift in infringement proceedings, the Commission's ultimate recourse to ensure transposition of legislation, as the Member States have improved the efficiency with which they respond to the infringement procedure. The Action Plan has been a catalyst for improvement in administrative cooperation. Coordination centres and contact points have been set up at national level to improve the day-to-day operation of single market rules. The report concludes by looking ahead to future perspectives, particularly the impact of the euro on the single market. The single currency will undoubtedly give a new impetus to market integration. The Commission will remain vigilant in identifying practices which may jeopardise its development. Future scoreboards will focus on market integration and monitor practices which threaten the functioning of the single market. They will use indicators showing the degree of integration between national economies.