Trade, follow up to the Green paper COM(1996) 0350. White Paper

1999/2017(COS) - 04/05/1999 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Without debate, the European Parliament adopted the resolution by Riccardo Garosci (PPE,IT) on the Commission White Paper on commerce. The report supports the general approach taken by the Commission in its overview of the sector set out in the White Paper. It stresses the important social role that small-scale and local commerce plays in rural and periphral areas, its contribution to direct and indirect job creationand to economic and social cohesion, in both rural and urban areas. The Parliament considers that the necessary measures should be taken to prevent retailers from closing down and, to that end, to restore the balance between large-scale and traditional commerce. The report stresses in particular the role of direct selling both as a solution to the problems of retraining middle-aged people and as a new opportunity for young people and women, and calls on the Commission to carry out a special study in this area. The Commission is also called upon to promote electronic commerce, particularly in peripheral regions and to investigate how small businesses and shops could be supported in making the move to electronic shopping (eg. by training) and to spread the knowledge of good functional models. The Parliament calls on the Commission to consider the possibility of a proposal to regulate the growth of large-scale outlets and also calls for the more widespread use of electronic payment systems by commercial distribution organisations in order to restrict the amount of cash held by shops and supermarkets. To this end, it wishes to see a reduction in the fiscal burden on individual electronic payment transactions and a reduction in the application costs for payment cards. The report draws attention to the role that the commerce sector will play in the distribution of the eurowith special programmes and financing for the change over of accounting systems and the setting-up of technical working groups involving traders, producers, industry and cash register and computer system suppliers. The Parliament considers that it should be made easier for SMEs in the commercial sector to participate in Structural Fund programmes. It also considers that the competitive position of small shops should be guaranteed by meeting their specific needs, for example, by reducing inheritance tax so as to facilitate the transfer of businesses.