Commerce. Green paper

1996/2265(COS) - 18/09/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Riccardo GAROSCI (UPE, I), Parliament noted that it was the first occasion on which the Commission had addressed itself to a comprehensive study of commerce as a whole. It asked that particular attention be paid to the needs of small distributors, who play an important role in maintaining the social fabric in many regions. They suffered disproportionately from over-regulation and, consequently, should develop their commercial practices to keep in touch with reality. It took the view that the Member States must use all the means at their disposal to encourage the modernization of the retail trade and take measures to prevent its disappearance. The Commission was asked to consider the setting up of a European Retail Trade Monitoring Centre. In addition, the report hoped that SMUs in the commercial sector would derive benefit from the existing SMU programmes and that they would have access to appropriate bank credit facilities. It considered that these SMUs were subject to excessive over-regulation, but it was opposed to deregulation measures which would call into question the social rights of the commercial distribution sector and consumer protection. Parliament called for more widespread use of electronic payment systems in the distributive trades as well as a reduction in its costs (tax on electronic payment transactions, distribution of credit cards, etc.) with a view to limiting the amount of cash kept in shops, thereby acting as a disincentive to crime. Finally, Parliament called for more attention to be given to the role which commerce would play in the spread of the single European currency: it would encourage technological changes within the commercial system should be encouraged through programmes and funding to facilitate the change of accounting systems and by setting up technical working parties comprising traders, industrial manufacturers, and suppliers of cash registers and computer systems.