Basic information

1995/2285(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Consumer policy: priorities 1996-1998 **Subject** 4.60 Consumers' protection in general	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	WHITEHEAD Phillip (PSE)	09/01/1996

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
JURI Legal Affairs, Citizens' Rights	AÑOVEROS TRIAS DE BES Julio (PPE)	24/01/1996
DEVE Development and Cooperation	TELKÄMPER Wilfried (V)	24/11/1995

Council of the European Union

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
31/10/1995	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1995)0519	Summary
17/11/1995	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
09/10/1996	Vote in committee		Summary
09/10/1996	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0317/1996	
19/02/1997	Debate in Parliament		
20/02/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
17/03/1997	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1995/2285(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/4/07252

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0317/1996 OJ C 347 18.11.1996, p. 0005	09/10/1996	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0057/1997 OJ C 085 17.03.1997, p. 0101-0133	20/02/1997	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1995)0519	31/10/1995	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR0221/1996 OJ C 337 11.11.1996, p. 0049	12/06/1996	
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0889/1996 OJ C 295 07.10.1996, p. 0064	11/07/1996	Summary

Consumer policy: priorities 1996-1998

1995/2285(COS) - 11/07/1996 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

The Commission's sixth Action Plan confirms the considerable importance now attached to Community consumer policy and sets out new guidelines which the Economic and Social Committee fully endorses. As regards the legislative framework, the Committee wishes to see the shortcomings of Treaty Article 129a corrected and urges the Commission to make firm proposals on guarantees and after-sales services, the inclusion of non-processed agricultural products within the scope of Directive 85/374/EEC on product liability. It also asks the Commission to launch new initiatives in respect of service liability and to review the CAP from the consumer's standpoint. Solutions must be found to the exclusion of financial services from the Distance-Selling Directive and the inadequacy of consumer protection in the field of payment systems. With a view to improving the efficiency and reducing the costs of public services, the Committee suggests that the establishment of performance and reliability standards for non-liberalized services might help to increase consumer confidence. The Committee calls on the Commission to examine ways of ensuring the active participation of consumers in building the information society, since they are crucial to its success. Whilst regretting that consumer organizations are still denied the right to choose their representatives, the ESC hopes that the new Consumer Committee will be consulted on all aspects of consumer policy.

Consumer policy: priorities 1996-1998

1995/2285(COS) - 31/10/1995 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: to present the working priorities for the next three years in order to illustrate the direction being taken by consumer policy and the uses to which the limited resources available will be put. CONTENT: the Commission states in its new plan entitled "Priorities for consumer policy 1996-1998" that it intends to extend its range of work in order to improve consumer policy. In defining the priorities for action, it has therefore decided to: - address the areas of immediate interest to consumers, especially financial services, essential public utility services, foodstuffs and consumer education; - work for a really user-friendly information society and sustainable consumer patterns; - help the central and eastern European countries and developing countries to take advantage of the consumer policy. Top priority needs to be given to consumer information and education in order to give concrete expression to Europe in all its dimensions on a daily basis. This priority can only be implemented by closely involving consumer representatives, as they represent the cornerstone of a real awareness by the civil society of a consumer policy. The Commission will therefore step up its action to develop consumer associations at both national and European level.

Consumer policy: priorities 1996-1998

1995/2285(COS) - 20/02/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Parliament adopted the report by Mr Phillip WHITEHEAD (PSE, UK) on the communication from the Commission on priorities for consumer policy (1996-1998). Parliament urged the Commission to bring forward a detailed Action Plan setting out proposals upon which it intended to act and a timetable for their completion. It stressed that the subsidiarity principle should not provide an excuse for not strengthening consumer protection. Parliament hoped firstly for the completion of activities started during the previous period, calling on the Commission to monitor the transposition of directives into national law by the Member States and to submit a new proposal for a directive on service liability. With regard to new priorities the Commission was called on to focus on action in the following areas: 1. Facilitating access by consumers to justice. Parliament called for legislative actions to secure the mutual recognition of conditions for receiving legal aid, to enable consumer organisations to bring class actions and to establish the right to sue for infringements of Community law. 2. Representing consumers' financial interests. The Commission was called on a) to come forward with legislation that rendered mandatory the 1988 recommendation on payment systems, regulated the sales of financial services at a distance and established a single mathematical formula for calculating annual percentage rate across the Union; b) to follow up the Green Paper on mortgage credit; c) to consider the possibility of harmonizing legal procedures for the recovery of late payments. 3. Converting consumer information into consumer power. Parliament called on the Commission a) to develop the network of cross-border information centres providing free advice to consumers; b) to take measures to improve the systematic integration of consumer representatives into decision-making structures; c) to propose a product safety network to coordinate action in this field. 4. Promoting a sustainable food policy. Parliament called on the Commission to support the establishment of an independent food safety agency at European level. It also pointed out that it was essential to implement as soon as possible the new European legislation on labelling of foodstuffs. Consumers should be guaranteed full information including the clear indication of possible health risks. With regard to European products which are considered unsafe and are marketed in developing countries, the report advocated a strengthening of controls so that gradually these products become subject to the same health, safety and environmental standards as apply to those sold on the territory of the European Union. Double standards should be eliminated and fair-trade relations should be promoted.