Basic information

1996/2265(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Commerce. Green paper **Subject** 3.45.05 Business policy, e-commerce, after-sales service, commercial distribution 4.60 Consumers' protection in general	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy	GAROSCI Riccardo (UPE)	02/12/1996

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
REGI Regional Policy	MONFILS Philippe J.F. (ELDR)	27/02/1997
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	VICECONTE Guido (UPE)	17/12/1996

Council of the European Union

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
20/11/1996	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1996)0530	Summary
10/12/1996	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
08/07/1997	Vote in committee		Summary
08/07/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0254/1997	
17/09/1997	Debate in Parliament		
18/09/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
06/10/1997	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1996/2265(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	ECON/4/08477

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0254/1997 OJ C 304 06.10.1997, p. 0006	08/07/1997	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0452/1997 OJ C 304 06.10.1997, p. 0100-0125	18/09/1997	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1996)0530	20/11/1996	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0595/1997 OJ C 287 22.09.1997, p. 0034	28/05/1997	Summary
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR0107/1997 OJ C 244 11.08.1997, p. 0024	11/06/1997	

Commerce. Green paper

1996/2265(COS) - 28/05/1997 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

The green paper fails to describe the main characteristics of the information society and its basic defining features, which include electronic commerce. A more systematic and detailed assessment is required of the impact of the information society on existing forms of commercial activity. The World Trade Organization should initiate a worldwide debate on the electronic media with a view to codifying the rules governing their use and consolidating their internal practices with the necessary safety valves and reliability. The Member States should respond directly to the new conditions prevailing in the information society and take urgent legislative measures to cater for the new requirements of businesses and consumers. The ESC proposes that reference be made to commercial activity in one article of the revised treaty which will emerge from the IGC. The ongoing pan-European dialogue on commerce, launched with the publication of the Green Paper on commerce, must lead to the drawing up of an action plan that will cover all the Community policies on commerce.

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.

Commerce. Green paper

1996/2265(COS) - 20/11/1996 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: this Green Paper seeks to stimulate a wide-ranging discussion on the challenges facing commerce and the ways in which they can be met. SUBSTANCE: the Green Paper examines the structure and development of the commerce and distribution sector, emphasising the scale and diversity of commerce, which is the second largest economic sector in the EU. With 22 million people employed (i.e. 16% of the total workforce) in some 4.5 million companies it is a key sector for economic development and for employment. The Green Paper then describes the actions of Member States and the EU and their respective roles with regard to this sector. Finally the document identifies the challenges facing commerce and distribution, formulates a series of questions which require public consultation and sets a timetable for the study of possible choices on future initiatives to be submitted during 1997. The main challenges which must be faced include: - increased competition resulting from the growth in trade; - constraints associated with developing the full potential of the single market from heterogeneous regulations on a national, regional and local level; - the introduction of the Euro and the administrative, accounting and psychological changes it will involve. In this respect the national authorities and the Commission have a key role to play in helping the private sector to adapt to the single currency; - the development in the needs and wishes of consumers and the 'Europeanization' of their purchasing behaviour; - the simplification of the administrative and legislative environment of the commercial companies; - the growing use of electronic trading and the exploitation of new technology to facilitate direct trading; - the development of the information society and the ability of commerce to adapt to it and participate in it; - the maintenance of rural and urban cohesion. The Commission notes that the principle of subsidiarity is particularly important for this sector but because of the development of the internal market a growing number of decisions are taken at EU level.