Basic information

2002/2173(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Consumer policy: strategy for 2002-2006 **Subject** 4.60.02 Consumer information, advertising, labelling 4.60.06 Consumers' economic and legal interests	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health, Consumer Policy	WHITEHEAD Phillip (PSE)	18/06/2002

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
BUDG Budgets	GLASE Anne-Karin (PPE-DE)	18/07/2002
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs	RADWAN Alexander (PPE-DE)	26/08/2002
JURI Legal Affairs and Internal Market	THYSSEN Marianne (PPE-DE)	10/09/2002
FEMM Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities	OOMEN-RUIJTEN Ria (PPE-DE)	10/07/2002

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs	2470	2002-12-02
Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)	2426	2002-05-21

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Health and Food Safety	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary

07/05/2002	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2002)0208	Summary
21/05/2002	Debate in Council		
02/09/2002	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
02/12/2002	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
22/01/2003	Vote in committee		Summary
22/01/2003	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0023/2003	
13/03/2003	Decision by Parliament	T5-0100/2003	Summary
13/03/2003	End of procedure in Parliament		
10/03/2004	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2002/2173(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/5/16490

Consumer policy: strategy for 2002-2006

2002/2173(COS) - 13/03/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the draft by Philip WHITEHEAD (PES, UK) on the Commission's Communication. (Please refer to the document dated 22/01/03.) On the first objective - "a high level of consumer protection"- Parliament felt that serious reflection over any further use of the mutual recognition and country of origin principles without first effectively setting and enforcing a high common level of consumer protection at the EU level. It also emphasised the need to ensure that consumers are fully and reliably informed about GMOs and the products, foods and feed produced from GMOs, so as to allow them to make an informed choice of product and gain confidence in GMO products and technology. On the second objective, the "effective enforcement of consumer protection rules, Parliament felt that the Commission should concentrate on strengthening uniform enforcement of existing legislation before proposing additional rules that might bring about further legal uncertainty if applied unevenly. It noted that unequal enforcement of consumer protection rules amongst national jurisdictions may lead to considerable distortion of competition in certain sectors, and asked the Commission to include a thorough survey of this aspect in its action plan. Parliament also felt that it is necessary for consumer protection legislation to confer on competitors legal status to bring proceedings on matters concerning improper sales methods. On the matter of consumer organisations, Parliament suggested that guidelines should be established to distinguish bona fide consumer groups from those that masquerade as such whilst being funded by industrial interests. Basic requirements for consumer organisations, including safeguards for their internal transparency and democracy, should be established.

Consumer policy: strategy for 2002-2006

2002/2173(COS) - 02/12/2002

The Council welcomes the Commission consumer policy strategy 2002-2006. It calls upon the Commission to implement its strategy with its three policy objectives and to put a specific emphasis on the following issues: - to prioritise a high level of consumer protection also in other Community policies and activities; - to take into consideration consumers' interests in services of general interest; - to consider as priorities for its work the development of guidance and appropriate standards under the general product safety Directive, the presentation of an analysis of the options for addressing the safety of services and the development of sectoral Community legislation concerning safety aspects, such as new legislation concerning chemicals; - to continue its review of the existing Community consumer legislation and its reporting on the implementation of existing directives; - to present the appropriate proposals to complete the internal market for financial services; - to continue its work and take steps towards actions in order to increase consumer confidence in cross-border transactions including electronic payments in the internal market; - to present the results of the work on follow-up of the Communication on European contract law; - to promote consumer interests in international bilateral and multilateral trade relations. The Commission and the Member States are called upon : - to examine the existing enforcement systems in the Member

States and, taking those results into account, to examine the possibilities of strengthening enforcement co-operation by and between the enforcement authorities and the Commission within the areas covered by the strategy; - without prejudice to consumers' option for seeking judicial redress, to promote and support alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to facilitate for consumers to resolve disputes across borders, including the consolidation of the European Extra-Judicial Network; - to continue discussions on and investigate the possibilities to develop a common approach and objectives for consumer statistics; - to ensure that the proposal for a future legal act for Community activities in favour of consumers reflects and supports the objectives outlined in the Commission strategy; - to support representative consumer organisations so that they can independently promote consumers' interests at Community as well as national level; - to encourage the development of dialogue between consumer organisations and business; - to ensure the representation of consumer interests in the standardisation work in relevant areas; - to generally consult with the consumer organisations in connection with the formulation of legislation and policy in all relevant policy areas. The Member States are called upon to ensure that the objectives of the consumer policy strategy are, where relevant, also taken into account in the national policies. It also invites the Commission to present to the Council every 18 months a review of the consumer policy strategy 2002-2006 based on a constant monitoring of the short-term rolling programme of actions including an assessment and evaluation of the effects of the Community and national activities in support of the objectives of the strategy.

Consumer policy: strategy for 2002-2006

2002/2173(COS) - 07/05/2002 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : to present communication sets out the Commission's strategy for consumer policy at European level over the next five years (2002-2006). CONTENT : the new strategy proposed by the Commission sets out three mid-term objectives, implemented through actions included in a short-term rolling programme, which will be regularly reviewed through a working document of the services of the Commission. The three objectives are: - A high common level of consumer protection; - Effective enforcement of consumer protection rules; - Involvement of consumer organisations in EU policies. These three objectives are designed to help achieving integration of consumer concerns into all other EU policies, to maximise the benefits of the single market for consumers and to prepare for enlargement. The new consumer policy strategy will be reviewed regularly. Under each objective, the strategy presents the main illustrative actions that the Commission intends to present over the period. The Commission will come up with separate and individual proposals to Council and Parliament and Council. Key factors have been taken into account in developing this new strategy: the practical introduction of euro notes and coins, social, economic and technological changes such as e-commerce, the current state of integration of the Internal Market, the perspective of enlargement and the current debate on European governance. - Objective 1: "A high common level of consumer protection". This means harmonising, by whatever means is most appropriate (framework directive, standards, best practices), not just the safety of goods and services, but also those aspects of consumer economic and legal interests that give consumers the confidence necessary to conduct transactions anywhere in the Internal Market. Under this objective, the chief actions are initiatives on follow-up to commercial practices issues addressed by the Green Paper on EU Consumer Protection and on the safety of services. - Objective 2: "Effective enforcement of consumer protection rules". As the degree of economic integration in the Internal Market steadily increases and more opportunities are open for consumers, consumers should be given in practice the same protection throughout the EU. Priority actions, under this objective, are the development of an administrative co-operation framework between Member States and of redress mechanisms for consumers. - Objective 3: "Involvement of consumer organisations in EU policies". In order for consumer protection policies to be effective, consumers themselves must have an opportunity to provide an input into the development of policies that affect them. Consumers and their representatives should have the capacity and resources to promote their interests on similar footing as other stakeholders. The main actions to achieve this will include the review of mechanisms for participation of consumer organisations in EU policy making and the setting up of education and capacity-building projects.