Basic information

2010/2011(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Delivering a single market to consumers and citizens **Subject** 1.20 Citizen's rights 2 Internal market, single market 4.60.06 Consumers' economic and legal interests	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection	GRECH Louis (S&D)	15/12/2009
	Shadow rapporteur KARAS Othmar (PPE) ROCHEFORT Robert (ALDE) HARBOUR Malcolm (ECR) DE JONG Dennis (GUE/NGL)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
PETI Petitions	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Economic and Financial Affairs ECOFIN	2994	2010-02-16
Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)	2999	2010-03-01

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union	BARNIER Michel

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary

21/01/2010	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
16/02/2010	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
01/03/2010	Debate in Council		Summary
28/04/2010	Vote in committee		Summary
03/05/2010	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0132/2010	
19/05/2010	Debate in Parliament		
20/05/2010	Decision by Parliament	T7-0186/2010	Summary
20/05/2010	Results of vote in Parliament		
20/05/2010	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2010/2011(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	IMCO/7/01840

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE439.933	19/03/2010	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE439.939	21/04/2010	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0132/2010	03/05/2010	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0186/2010	20/05/2010	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2010)4416	16/09/2010	

Delivering a single market to consumers and citizens

2010/2011(INI) - 20/05/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 578 votes to 28 with 16 abstentions a resolution on delivering a single market to consumers and citizens. It considers that the Union is facing a particularly problematic time in the history of single European market integration. Members stress that,

notwithstanding the economic, technological and legislative weaknesses in its structure, the single European market, along with the eurozone, best illustrates the true meaning of EU economic integration and unity, and is certainly the most visible achievement of European integration for EU citizens. They underline; however, that **the single market integration process is not irreversible**.

Members consider that the economic and financial crisis have damaged the single market integration process and that antagonism towards, and distrust of, the single market have increased as a result of shortcomings and inequalities emanating from Member States' economic systems. They are concerned that the current crisis could actually be used to justify reviving protectionist measures in various Member States, whereas the downturn calls for common safeguard mechanisms instead. The single market is in dire need of a new momentum. Members emphasise that this process will necessitate firm authority and considerable initiative on the part of the European Commission, and political commitment from the Council, the Member States and the European Parliament.

Need for a holistic and common approach: Members emphasise that a stronger, deeper and expanded single market is of vital importance for growth and job creation. The single market should provide benefits for consumers in terms of better quality, greater variety, reasonable prices, and safety of goods and services and it is a very important prerequisite for the success of the EU 2020 strategy. Parliament maintains that revitalisation of the single market requires effective implementation of more adequate checks and balances, and more dialogue. An evidence-based and citizen-based approach will help the Union to win back popular confidence in the single European market and to find the right formula for the adoption of initiatives to give the Union the competitive edge it needs, without prejudice to the social dimension.

Challenges and opportunities: Members emphasise that implementation of the single market rules remains uneven, since market networks are not sufficiently interlinked, which means that enterprises and citizens have to face the daily reality of continuing difficulties in their cross-border activities, which may involve 27 different legal systems for a single transaction. They highlight the importance of i) establishing a green single market for emerging low-carbon and environmental technologies, ii) the opportunities offered by the internet and e-commerce, the need to reform intellectual property rules and iii) the urgent need to resolve the outstanding issue of the Community patent.

Citizens and consumers: Parliament is convinced that European citizens' knowledge of the single market is low, non-existent, confused or even negative, in part because of a lack of political commitment and information and a low level of public awareness. The resolution sets out some of the difficulties encountered by consumers especially in the services sector, and highlights the need to organise the relevant websites, SOLVIT and contact points more effectively .It deplores the fact that only a small percentage of citizens, consumers and SMEs are aware of existing alternative redress mechanisms, or know how to register a complaint with the Commission. Problem-solving systems, such as SOLVIT, need to be strengthened in accordance with Parliament's report on SOLVIT. Parliament calls on the Commission to initiate an accelerated Treaty infringement procedure if an unresolved SOLVIT complaint reveals a prima facie breach of Community law.

Small and medium-sized enterprises: Members emphasise that greater efforts must be made to improve access for SMEs to the single market. More of the obstacles which prevent SMEs from accessing public procurement markets should be removed in order to boost competitiveness in the single market, specifically by simplifying the requirements for SMEs in calls for tender by contracting authorities. Parliament encourages future joint initiatives by the Commission and the Member States to: (1) support small businesses operating across borders throughout the EU; (2) effect a tangible reduction in administrative, financial and regulatory burdens, particularly the administrative hurdles faced by SMEs, irrespective of whether they operate locally, nationally or at European level, in accordance with the principle of proportionality. In this regard it calls on the Member States and the Commission strictly to implement and apply the Think Small First principle as outlined in the Small Business Act.

Stronger institutional role in establishing and implementing single market rules: Members ask the Commission to develop new ways, other than formal infringement procedures, to improve the transposition and enforcement of single market rules. They ask it to consider innovative mechanisms, such as the mutual evaluation procedure envisaged in the Services Directive, to encourage peer review and Member State ownership, and to improve informal problem-solving mechanisms such as SOLVIT and EU-PILOT. Parliament calls for the strengthening of Parliament's role in the areas of application, enforcement and monitoring of single market legislation. It considers that the enhanced role for the EP and the national parliaments under the Lisbon Treaty must entail better synergism between the two parliamentary levels.

Measures needed to empower citizens and SMEs more effectively: the resolution calls on the Commission and Member States to:

- develop a targeted communication strategy focusing on the day-to-day problems that citizens encounter when settling and taking up employment in another Member State, especially when undertaking cross-border transactions moving, shopping or selling across borders, and the social, health, consumer-protection and environmental-protection standards on which they can rely; This communication strategy should expressly include problem-solving methods, such as Solvit;
- step up their efforts to ensure that the product standards used within the single market become the main global standard, thus ensuring a level playing field for European companies, and in particular SMEs, wishing to operate beyond the single market;
- focus on prioritising 'consumer-friendly' legislation relating to the single market, which makes a difference to the daily lives of European citizens, when planning its yearly activities
- increase, through information campaigns and tougher checks, their efforts to raise citizens' confidence in the CE mark, a fundamental tool for ensuring consumer rights and quality standards in the single market.

Strategic reports and proposals: Parliament makes a series of proposals on the strategy to be adopted and the need to adopt a '**Single Market Act**', which should be presented' by May 2011–- well ahead of the 20th anniversary of the 1992 Single Market Programme – putting citizens, consumers and SMEs at the heart of the single market. It emphasises that the Act should be looked upon as a blueprint for future action if we are to achieve a knowledge-based, highly competitive, social and environmentally friendly, green market economy which also ensures a credible level playing field. Parliament reiterates the importance of the Services directive in completing the single market, and the huge potential it has for delivering benefits to consumers and SME. Members call on the Commission, after the implementation phase, to undertake an evaluation of the Directive to determine whether it has achieved its main goals. They call for a clear involvement of Parliament in this work.

The Commission is invited to i) during the current parliamentary term present a proposal for a regulation on a European Statute for Mutual Societies and Associations, ii) to take the requisite steps to propose, as soon as possible, a feasibility study and consultation process designed to lead to the

introduction of a European Mutual Society Statute, iii) to focus more closely on market monitoring, especially in the areas of financial services, insurance, telephony, banking services and utilities.

Lastly, Members invite the Commission to consider adopting a 'Citizens' Charter' encompassing the various facets of the right to live and work anywhere in the EU, and states that this right must be readily available to all EU citizens.

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The Council adopted the following **conclusions on the EU single market – Directive on Services**: since its launch in the mid-1980s, the Single Market Programme has contributed to the promotion of competition within the EU and has resulted in remarkable benefits in terms of price developments, growth and jobs. However, the Council considers that its potential has not been fully exploited and that the further deepening of the Single Market should be one key element of the EU's forward looking strategy.

It welcomes President Barroso's commitment to updating the single market and looks forward to the evidence-based package for tomorrow's single market, including proposals for specific actions.

Significant internal and external challenges remain. This will require a commitment to a broad set of single market reforms. Most immediately, the Council stresses the importance of the internal market for services as a key element for ensuring competitive pricing, enhancing competitiveness more generally, and increasing potential growth and employment. It acknowledges that the **incomplete transposition of Community directives** is one reason why the integration process is still far from complete. It calls for a comprehensive and ambitious implementation of the Services Directive, and urges those Member States that have not met the transposition deadline to do their utmost to finalise it as soon as possible.

The Council welcomes the **evaluation of the Services Directive** as well as an economic assessment of the progress it has brought for the Internal Market. It highlights the **potential of the mutual evaluation exercise launched in January 2010** to unleash the growth potential of the services sector. An effective and transparent mutual evaluation, under the supervision of the Council, will contribute to increasing competition by helping to remove regulatory inefficiencies, identify best regulatory practices and appropriate new initiatives to deepen the internal market. The Council calls for the engagement and active participation of the Member States and the Commission.

In line with the 2007 Single Market Review, which emphasised the need for a better understanding of the functioning of markets based on **an evidence-based approach** the Council also reiterates its support for the market monitoring and smart regulation initiatives to deepen the Single Market in the EU2020 Strategy with a modern evidence-based tool kit. The Better Regulation initiative has contributed to improving the functioning of the single market, by developing impact assessments of policy proposals, and further extending the simplification and reduction of administrative burdens. These economic tools for better inform regulatory or non-regulatory initiatives in the future could be further explored.

The Council also reiterates the importance of market monitoring and the benefits of collaboration between the Commission and Member States building on the renewed screening methodology and setting up a transparent process for selecting sectors for further in-depth investigations. To this end, the Council takes note of the Communication by the Commission on "A better functioning food supply chain in Europe", which illustrates how practical recommendations that emanate from evidence-based tools such as market monitoring, can best support EU and national decision-making process in delivering necessary sectoral reforms, while avoiding new bureaucratic costs for Member States and Commission.

The Council encourages the Commission to:

- conclude outstanding studies, launch further in-depth market monitoring studies in sectors showing signs of market malfunctioning, and gather further experience in the implementation of market monitoring in close cooperation with Member States and the EPC;
- report on market monitoring by the end of 2010, in particular, as regards progress on studies and their contribution to the wider Single Market agenda.

Lastly, it also recognises the importance of the EU State Aid framework as an important tool in avoiding distortions and enhancing competition within the internal market, helping deliver better outcomes for citizens through increased jobs, growth, and consumer benefits. In this context, the Council takes note of the fact that the Temporary Framework for the Real Economy is scheduled to expire by the end 2010, and welcomes the Commission's continuing efforts to implement State aid rules so that they are conducive to making the internal market work better. The Council also acknowledges the importance of achieving a timely withdrawal of temporary support measures."

Delivering a single market to consumers and citizens

2010/2011(INI) - 01/03/2010

The Council took note of the following three reports:

- the Internal Market Scoreboard No 20: state of play of implementation by Member States of internal market directives into national law;
- report on the SOLVIT system (an online internal market problem-solving network);
- **report on the "Citizens Sign Post Service"**, a service that provides personalised advice to individual citizens in relation to the rights they enjoy under single market rules.