Basic information

2012/2133(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
New agenda for European consumer policy **Subject** 4.60 Consumers' protection in general	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection	GARCÉS RAMÓN Vicente Miguel (S&D)	21/06/2012
	Shadow rapporteur KALNIETE Sandra (PPE) ROCHEFORT Robert (ALDE) HARBOUR Malcolm (ECR) TRIANTAPHYLLIDES Kyriacos (GUE/NGL) SALVINI Matteo (EFD)	

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Health and Food Safety	BORG Tonio

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
05/07/2012	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
25/04/2013	Vote in committee		
17/05/2013	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0163/2013	Summary
10/06/2013	Debate in Parliament		
11/06/2013	Decision by Parliament	T7-0239/2013	Summary
11/06/2013	Results of vote in Parliament		
11/06/2013	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2012/2133(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/7/09947

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE500.621	23/11/2012	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE504.100	28/01/2013	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0163/2013	17/05/2013	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0239/2013	11/06/2013	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2013)626	15/11/2013	

New agenda for European consumer policy

2012/2133(INI) - 17/05/2013 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection adopted the own-initiative report by Vicente Miguel GARCÉS RAMÓN (S&D, ES) on a new agenda for European Consumer Policy.

Recalling that the promotion and protection of consumers and their rights are core Union values, Members propose that the new agenda cover the following spheres of action:

Strengthening awareness, enhancing knowledge, safety and consumer rights: consumers should be able to **exercise their rights easily and effectively in basic areas** including food, health, energy, financial and digital services, access to broadband, data protection, transport, and telecommunications.

The report:

- stresses that **educating consumers** reduces their risks vis-à-vis dangerous or counterfeit products, speculative financial products and misleading advertising. Members take the view that education (including financial education) and empowerment of consumers need to be lifelong, and should begin at school. A good knowledge of consumer rights within enterprises is also essential. The Commission is asked to present **a proposal on how to improve citizens' knowledge of the financial sector;**
- welcomes the Commission's proposal to introduce a legal framework for **product safety,** and stresses, in this context, the importance of effective market surveillance. Members want to promote initiatives which aim to translate the results of scientific advances into benefits for consumers. They call, however, for adequate consumer protection and product safety in the markets for consumer goods produced using **nanotechnology or genetically modified organisms**;
- highlights the need for better **protection of the rights of vulnerable consumer groups** such as children and older people.

Improving implementation, stepping up enforcement and securing redress: the report calls in particular on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the **timely and consistent implementation** of the Union consumer acquis. It also calls on the Commission to take the necessary legal action against Member States infringing or failing to implement or enforce single market legislation,

The report recommends that better use be made of the available **information on consumer behaviour.** It suggests, accordingly, that the Joint Research Centre (JRC) should carry out monitoring work, in the form of a funded research project with a view to identifying the priority areas for citizens when it comes to enhancing their consumer rights in the single market. Members point out that EU policies need to **promote cooperation between consumer associations and public institutions in all fields,** as well as to foster exchanges of best practice.

Aligning rights and key policies to economic and societal change: the Commission is particularly asked to:

- focus not only on the purchase of digital content in the digital environment, but also on how to promote the sale of goods and services in the digital environment and boost consumer confidence;
- pay particular attention to consumer protection in the field of short-term loans;
- cooperate with the European Parliament and the national authorities in order to improve the information available to consumers on how to better manage household energy consumption;
- approve the resources required for the effective implementation of the Agenda, with regard to the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020, and to conduct systematic impact assessments.

E-commerce: the Commission is asked to take measures to combat the unequal treatment of consumers in the single market arising from current **distance-selling restrictions** applied by companies involved in cross border distance selling.

The report stresses the need to:

- offer services to customers who do not have access to the internet;
- ensure the quality, safety, traceability and authenticity of products, avoid criminal or unfair practices, and comply with the rules on personal data protection;
- ensure fast, reliable and competitive delivery services for e-commerce.

Financial services, investment products and the economic crisis: in this sphere, the report:

- stresses that **market information** must be reliable, clear and comparable, and accessible electronically and other forms, and emphasises the need to take out legal action over unfair commercial practices or contract terms;
- calls for the **list of passenger rights** common to all transport modes to be circulated widely, in a concise form and in all official Union languages;
- emphasises the need to facilitate the right of access to a **basic payment account** for all consumers and to provide them with clear and relevant information about investment products.

Cooperation between European and national authorities and consumer organisations: Members highlight the need for close cooperation between European, national and local authorities and consumer associations in order to establish consultation mechanisms and implement the measures planned in the Agenda.

The Commission is asked to make the **RAPEX** (Rapid Alert System for Non-Food Products) reporting system more transparent and effective.

Dispute resolution and redress: Members draw attention to the fact that redress mechanisms such as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) or Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) must be fast, accessible and effective. They call on the Commission to explore measures that would lead to the creation of a Union-wide coherent **collective redress mechanism** in the field of consumer protection which would be applicable to cross border cases.

New agenda for European consumer policy

2012/2133(INI) - 11/06/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 586 votes to 52, with 9 abstentions, a resolution in response to the Commission communication on a European Consumer Agenda.

Recalling that the promotion and protection of consumers and their rights are core Union values, Parliament proposes that the new agenda cover the following spheres of action:

(1) Strengthening awareness, enhancing knowledge, safety and consumer rights: Parliament welcomes the holistic approach of the European Consumer Agenda, and in particular the fact that it covers almost all important policy areas for consumers and thus sends out a strong signal on boosting the role and importance of consumers' safety and rights in the single market. It stresses, however, that this must also be reflected in legislative and other proposals by the Commission.

In particular, **consumers should be able to exercise their rights easily and effectively in basic areas** including food, health, energy, financial and digital services, access to broadband, data protection, transport and telecommunications.

Parliament:

- stresses that **educating consumers** reduces their risks vis-à-vis dangerous or counterfeit products, speculative financial products and misleading advertising. Members take the view that education (including financial education) and empowerment of consumers need to be lifelong, and should begin at school. The Commission is asked to present a proposal on how to improve citizens' knowledge of the financial sector;
- welcomes the Commission's proposal to introduce a **legal framework for product safety**, and stresses, in this context, the importance of effective market surveillance. The Commission is called upon to establish **updated and standard rules** that guarantee the safety and authenticity of products. Members call for adequate consumer protection and product safety in the markets for consumer goods produced using **nanotechnology** or **genetically modified organisms**;
- stresses on the need to guarantee the **independence and transparency of scientific expertise** and regulatory opinion, in particular in the field of health, environment and food policies;
- highlights the need for better protection of the **rights of vulnerable consumer groups** such as children and older people.

The Commission is called upon to carry out an **investigation** on the issue of possible **differences in the quality of products with the same brand** and packaging which are distributed in the single market and inform the European Parliament of the results of this investigation.

(2) Improving implementation, stepping up enforcement and securing redress: Parliament calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the **timely and consistent implementation** of the Union consumer acquis. It also calls on the Commission to take the necessary legal action against Member States infringing or failing to implement or enforce single market legislation,

The resolution recommends that better use be made of the available **information on consumer behaviour.** It suggests, accordingly, that the Joint Research Centre (JRC) should carry out monitoring work, in the form of a funded research project with a view to identifying the priority areas for citizens when it comes to enhancing their consumer rights in the single market. Parliament points out that EU policies need to **promote cooperation between consumer associations and public institutions in all fields,** as well as to foster exchanges of best practice.

(3) Aligning rights and key policies to economic and societal change: the Commission is asked to:

- focus not only on the purchase of digital content in the digital environment, but also on how to promote the sale of goods and services in the digital environment and boost consumer confidence;
- pay particular attention to consumer protection in the field of short-term loans;
- cooperate with the European Parliament and the national authorities in order to improve the information available to consumers on how to better manage household energy consumption;
- approve the resources required for the effective implementation of the Agenda, with regard to the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020, and to conduct systematic impact assessments.

(4) E-commerce: the Commission is asked to take measures to combat the unequal treatment of consumers in the single market arising from current **distance-selling restrictions** applied by companies involved in cross border distance selling.

The resolution stresses the need to:

- offer services to customers who do not have access to the internet;
- ensure the quality, safety, traceability and authenticity of products, avoid criminal or unfair practices, and comply with the rules on personal data protection;
- ensure fast, reliable and competitive delivery services for e-commerce.

(5) Financial services, investment products and the economic crisis: in this sphere, the resolution:

- stresses that **market information** must be reliable, clear and comparable, and accessible electronically and other forms, and emphasises the need to take out legal action over unfair commercial practices or contract terms;
- calls for the **list of passenger rights** common to all transport modes to be circulated widely, in a concise form and in all official Union languages;
- emphasises the need to facilitate the right of access to a **basic payment account** for all consumers and to provide them with clear and relevant information about investment products.

(6) Cooperation between European and national authorities and consumer organisations: Parliament highlights the need for close cooperation between European, national and local authorities and consumer associations in order to establish consultation mechanisms and implement the measures planned in the Agenda.

The Commission is asked to make the **RAPEX** (Rapid Alert System for Non-Food Products) reporting system more transparent and effective.

(7) Dispute resolution and redress: Parliament draws attention to the fact that redress mechanisms such as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) or Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) must be fast, accessible and effective. It calls on the Commission to explore measures that would lead to the creation of a Union-wide coherent **collective redress mechanism** in the field of consumer protection which would be applicable to cross border cases.