

Newsletter

Issue 110 - May 2020

SELECTED NEWS

Exchange of views with Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice President of the European Commission for a Europe Fit for the Digital Age on the EU response to the COVID-19 outbreak



On 4 May 2020, IMCO held an exchange of views with Executive Vice-President of the Commission, Margrethe Vestager, on the EU's response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Her presentation focused on the EU's recovery from the crisis, which she said would have to embrace the green transition and digital transformation. She also stressed that it was crucial to ensure all citizens had access to good internet connectivity, that SMEs receive the support they need to survive this period, and that the Single Market be supported through the relevant EU funding programmes. She said the Commission was taking forward work on the Digital Services Act, which would be crucial for setting a clear legal framework for online platforms. One issue of particular interest among Members was the development of mobile apps for contact tracing. EVP Vestager and several Members stressed the importance of creating a system that commands citizens' trust and highlighted the need for apps to be interoperable.

Exchange of views with Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market on the EU coronavirus exit strategy



On 18 May, IMCO Members exchanged views with Thierry Breton, Commissioner for the Internal Market, on the EU coronavirus exit strategy. The discussion focused on the Joint European Roadmap towards lifting COVID-19 containment measures, presented by the Commission and the European Council on 15 April. The Commission was invited to present its views on the gradual lifting of lockdown measures, its proactive monitoring of the compliance with EU law of national restrictions, on free standards and market conformity assessment procedures for PPE and medical devices, as well as on tracing apps as part of the exit strategy. The exchange of views also allowed Members to ask questions on the implementation of the Recovery Roadmap towards a more resilient, sustainable and fair Europe. More particularly, the Commission was asked to present clarifications as regards the recovery fund dedicated to the COVID-19 crisis, and its impact on the MFF, including the Single Market Programme.

Exchange of views with Paolo Gentiloni, Commissioner for Economy - on the EU response to the COVID-19 outbreak



On 20 May, IMCO will have an exchange of views with Commissioner Gentiloni on topics related to customs, where a dialogue will be established on the recent and upcoming developments in this policy area and the influence of the COVID-19 outbreak in the planning of work. The Commissioner is expected to detail the impact on the two customs-related initiatives that are in the programme of the Commission (communication on governance and legislative initiative on the Single Window). Moreover, the Commissioner will have an opportunity to exchange with Members on the foreseeable evolutions of the negotiations of the two MFF Customs proposals, for which the inter-institutional negotiations currently are on hold until the Council approves a mandate to discuss the proposals in their entirety. The exchange will also be an opportunity to discuss the possible contingency measures that could become necessary if the MFF negotiations are not concluded before the end of 2020.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

(20 MAY 2020)

[Watch the committee meeting live](#)

Opinion - Proposed mandate for negotiations with the United Kingdom - Vote (remote voting procedure)



On 20 May, IMCO will vote on the [draft opinion](#) to the AFET and INTA INI Report on the proposed mandate for negotiations with the United Kingdom. The draft opinion underlines the interest of both the EU and the UK on agreeing terms of access to the Single Market that protect the EU acquis and safeguard the best interest of consumers. The vote will take place by remote ballot-voting procedure, and it will be the first time that IMCO uses this procedure for a draft text with compromise amendments.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Kris Peeters \(EPP\)](#)

Exchange of views with Monique Goyens, Director General, BEUC and Markus Beyrer, Director-General, BusinessEurope

On 20 May, IMCO will hold an exchange of views with BEUC and BusinessEurope on the impact on consumers and businesses of the COVID-19 crisis. Both BEUC and BusinessEurope have issued policy recommendations on how to emerge from the crisis while upholding Single Market freedoms and a high level of EU consumer protection. BEUC has focused its analysis of risks to consumer rights in key sectors of the economy, including retail, digital services, air and package travel, and cultural and leisure activities. It has also called for increased EU coordination on enforcement and redress. BusinessEurope has structured its contributions in four key pillars, including a focus on revitalising the Single Market, advocating a coordinated fiscal stimulus with EU investment, as well as strengthening supply chains and supporting business innovation.

INL Opinion - Civil liability regime for Artificial Intelligence - Exchange of views



On 20 May, the Rapporteur Svenja Hahn (Renew) will present her [draft opinion](#) to the JURI own-initiative legislative report on the "Civil liability regime for artificial intelligence". The draft opinion stresses the need to assess whether the existing liability framework, in particular the Product Liability Directive, needs to be updated in order to be in line with new technological developments, while ensuring a high level of consumer protection from harm caused by complex products. It highlights the need for a risk-based approach to AI and further harmonisation of product liability rules. The opinion also emphasises the necessity to review the definitions of "product", "producer", "damage", and "defect", as well as the concept of burden of proof, in order to ensure a fair liability system for consumers.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Svenja Hahn \(Renew\)](#)

UPDATE ON IMCO TRILOGUES

Due to the ongoing safety measures in place at all EU institutions in response to the COVID-19 crisis, no IMCO trilogue meetings have been held since the last issue of the IMCO newsletter edition (April 2020).

EVENTS

Due to the ongoing safety measures in place in response to the COVID-19 crisis, no IMCO missions, public hearings, or other events have taken place in Committee since the last IMCO newsletter edition (April 2020).

OTHERS NEWS

Next IMCO Committee meetings: Monday 8 June, Monday 29 June, Monday 6 July and Tuesday 7 July 2020.

NB.: Due to the evolving COVID-19 situation, this schedule may be changed.

LAST COMMITTEE MEETING

(4 AND 18 MAY 2020)

INI Report - Product safety - Exchange of views



On 18 May, the IMCO Committee held an exchange of views during which the Rapporteur Marion Walsmann (EPP) presented her [draft report](#) entitled “addressing product safety in the Single Market”. The Rapporteur argues that greater efforts are needed to improve the safety of products and ensure a high level of consumer protection, thus increasing citizens’ trust in the Single Market, including in times of crisis. Existing EU product safety rules need to be adapted to take into account the digital transformation, in particular AI, IoT and robotics. Moreover, consumers should be able to count on a high level of safety for all products throughout their lifecycle. Finally, the draft report emphasises that effective market surveillance is key, including as regards products purchased online and imported from third countries.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Marion Walsmann \(EPP\)](#)

INL Opinion - Framework of ethical aspects of artificial intelligence, robotics and related technologies - Exchange of views

On 18 May, IMCO held an exchange of views on the [draft opinion](#) to the JURI own-initiative legislative report on the “Framework of ethical aspects of AI, robotics and related technologies”. The draft opinion, presented by the Rapporteur Alexandra Geese (Greens/EFA), focuses on the necessity of a risk-based approach to the application of AI, to ensure consumer protection, as well as on the importance of securing the transparency and explainability of algorithmic systems.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Alexandra Geese \(Greens/EFA\)](#)

INI Report - Digital Services Act: Improving the functioning of the Single Market - Exchange of views

On 4 May, the Rapporteur Alex Agius Saliba presented his [draft report](#) entitled “Digital Services Act: Improving the functioning of the Single Market”. The Rapporteur calls on the Commission to put forward a proposal for a Digital Services Act following a set of recommendations on transparency and consumer protection, artificial intelligence, the need to tackle the spread of illegal content online, ex ante regulation of systemic platforms and the creation of a European regulatory body.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Alex Agius Saliba \(S&D\)](#)

INL Opinion - Digital Services Act: adapting commercial and civil law rules for commercial entities operating online - Exchange of views

On 4 May, the Rapporteur Dita Charanzova (Renew) presented her [draft opinion](#) on the JURI INL Report on the “Digital Services Act: adapting commercial and civil law rules for commercial entities operating online”. The draft opinion focuses on the need to improve transparency in digital advertising, to clarify consumer rights provisions, particularly in respect of smart contracts, but also to strengthen consumer rights in the area of End of Use Licensing Agreements (EULAs).

DRAFTSPERSON: [Dita Charanzová \(Renew\)](#)

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