



Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

2015/2210(INI)

25.9.2015

OPINION

of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

on the European Semester for economic policy coordination: implementation
of 2015 priorities
(2015/2210(INI))

Rapporteur: Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection calls on the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- having regard to its resolution of 11 March 2015 on Single Market governance within the European Semester 2015¹,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 13 May 2015 entitled ‘2015 European Semester: Country-specific recommendations’ (COM(2015)0250),
 - having regard to its resolution of 24 June 2015 on ‘the review of the economic governance framework: stocktaking and challenges’²,
1. Notes that the Single Market remains fragmented and insufficiently implemented, and that the great potential for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, innovation and job creation is still untapped, in particular as regards services; calls on the Commission and the Member States to honour their commitments and to safeguard the revival of the Single Market as one of the Union’s main priorities; considers it essential that the great potential of the Single Market be exploited to the maximum extent possible, through a holistic approach, in order to boost growth and competitiveness; stresses that the European Semester should embrace the objectives of an overarching, long-term EU strategy for growth and jobs which looks to 2020 and beyond; reiterates, therefore, its call for the swift implementation of all relevant EU legislation and urges the Commission to ensure more effective use of infringement proceedings, and the European Council to continue the further development of infringement proceedings in the framework of future revisions of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union;
 2. Reiterates its call on the Commission to put forward proposals for classifying the Single Market as a specific pillar of the European Semester, including dedicated guidelines and country-specific recommendations (CSRs) thereon, in order to cover a clear set of priorities related to the real economy; asks the Commission to enhance the linkage between the pillars; recalls that good economic governance and the impact thereof can be effective only if those implementing and applying the rules are adequately involved; calls on the Commission, therefore, to integrate the completion of all dimensions of the Single Market – goods, services, capital, labour, energy, transport and the digital sector – as part of the European Semester and the CSRs;
 3. Calls for the governance of the internal market to be strengthened through the European Semester by establishing a set of specific indicators to measure its performance, together with additional data; calls for a specific section to be included in the country reports which highlights barriers and progress in the internal market;
 4. Stresses that, for the European Semester to have a Single Market dimension, the Annual Growth Survey should encourage Member States to involve their local and regional

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0069.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0238.

authorities in setting differentiated contributions to the Europe 2020 targets and in designing and implementing the National Reform Programmes (NRPs) on the basis of the principle of Single Market governance;

5. Asks the Commission to call on the Member States to introduce into their annual NRPs a specific and detailed section on the Single Market, specifying the development of its integration at national level and the measures to be adopted the following year; calls on the Commission to adopt the same structure for its CSRs;
6. Stresses the importance and added value of the Single Market integration reports of previous years, given their contribution to the overall priorities set in the Commission's Annual Growth Survey and to the identification of CSRs as part of the European Semester; finds it most deplorable, therefore, that the Single Market integration report has been omitted for 2015 and that Parliament's call has not been acted on;
7. Welcomes the Commission's new approach to streamlining the European Semester process; appreciates, in this context, the Commission's work on defining CSRs relating to the Single Market, but considers it to be insufficient; calls for more determined efforts to guide and coordinate economic policies in order to ensure consistent and fair implementation of the economic governance framework across the Member States and to measure the effects of economic governance in all the Member States;
8. Is concerned about the persistent macroeconomic imbalances in some Member States, in particular high levels of public debt, large current account deficits and excessive risk in banking systems;
9. Supports the emphasis in the 2015 CSRs on the importance of removing unjustified restrictions on, and barriers to, entry in key sectors; asks the Member States concerned, furthermore, to give those recommendations their utmost consideration and, as a matter of urgent priority, to remove these obstacles to the growth of the Single Market;
10. Notes that the Single Market is one of the most important elements of the European project, and recognises that, for the European Semester process to be inclusive, Parliament should take an active role in it; calls for those Member States that have not implemented the CSRs as regards the internal market to explain the reasons to the competent committee of Parliament (the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection); asks that Parliament use such explanations as a basis for giving input to the Commission in relation to the development of new CSRs in time for publication in May;
11. Considers it regrettable that there are many complaints about implementation deficits; asks the Commission for a better monitoring and feedback system in respect of legal implementation; asks the Commission to re-evaluate legal frameworks that have severe implementation deficits;
12. Stresses that in most Member States public and private investment is insufficient; urges the Commission to take additional measures to improve and facilitate access to finance for SMEs (particularly in respect of key sectors, including the emerging digital sector), to ensure an improved business environment, to simplify procedures, to reduce administrative burdens in the Single Market and to support investment; stresses the importance of competitive and highly integrated markets with sound business regulation

for the success of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI);

13. Recalls the need to focus investments on the priorities set out in the Europe 2020 strategy, i.e. developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation, promoting a more resource-efficient, greener and more competitive economy and fostering a high-employment economy that delivers a high level of social and territorial cohesion; asks the Commission to respect the timetable for the launch of the EFSI in autumn 2015, so that it has the intended effect of stimulating the real economy and boosting recovery in the Member States; considers that these investments will serve to strengthen EU competitiveness in key growth sectors such as services, energy, transport and the digital Single Market;
14. Considers that greater support for SMEs from the Commission and the Member States is needed in order to expand their markets, foster innovation, promote their export capacity, stimulate job creation, help them to compete more effectively, particularly in domestic markets, and improve overall productivity; calls for the opportunities presented by the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME) programme for 2014-2020 to be maximised in order to improve SMEs' access to financing in the domestic and international markets; calls for other forms of financing to be promoted as an alternative to financing via banks;
15. Stresses that better and stronger tax coordination and renewed efforts to combat fraud, tax evasion and tax avoidance, with due respect for national competences, are needed in order to ensure a level playing field and to avoid unfair competition and detrimental distortions within the Single Market;
16. Emphasises that the European Semester is an obvious opportunity to push for more progress in efforts towards the digital Single Market; welcomes, in this context, the Commission communication on the roadmap for completing the digital Single Market; considers it essential to remedy the current fragmentation of national rules on digital services and to build a more innovative and transparent digital Single Market based on fair competition and providing a high level of accessibility and consumer protection; calls on the Commission to comply with the planned schedule and launch the 16 initiatives aimed at achieving a true digital Single Market for Europe, in order to contribute to the EU's economic recovery, improve its internal and external competitiveness and promote social cohesion;
17. Considers that the insufficient level of digital skills, uneven coverage and high costs limit the benefits of information and communications technology (ICT); urges the Commission and the Member States to give priority in the CSRs and the NRPs to digital training for individuals and companies and to securing access to network infrastructure for all citizens;
18. Believes that the Member States have to step up their efforts to modernise their public administrations by providing more, and better accessible, digital services for citizens and businesses, with a particular focus on SMEs, and to facilitate cross-border cooperation and interoperability between public administrations; supports the implementation of capacities for the evaluation and exchange of best practices in respect of digital services;
20. Recognises that there are several constraints that hinder the proper functioning of markets for products and services; supports the work done by the Commission on regulated

professions;

21. Notes that most Member States are below the Europe 2020 targets for R&D; asks the Commission to honour its intention to publish the review of the Europe 2020 strategy at the end of 2015 at the latest, in order to strengthen the role of the Single Market and the digital Single Market as key instruments for reviving economic growth and quality job creation in the EU; calls on the Member States to guide their economies more decisively towards a focus on innovation and knowledge;
22. Stresses that the full and rapid implementation of EU legislation on public procurement and concessions would provide a great opportunity to enhance innovation and access for SMEs, to promote sustainable development and to modernise public administration, by improving the quality, effectiveness and transparency of public spending and investment;
23. Believes that the ownership of CSRs by national parliaments needs to be strengthened; encourages the Member States to give the Commission the opportunity to present the CSRs in the national parliaments; calls on the Member States, furthermore, to implement the CSRs and to rigorously transpose the EU targets into national targets; reiterates, furthermore, its request that the Commission report to the competent committee of Parliament on the measures taken to ensure progress in the implementation of the CSRs and on the progress achieved thus far.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	23.9.2015
Result of final vote	+: 30 -: 7 0: 2
Members present for the final vote	Dita Charanzová, Carlos Coelho, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Daniel Dalton, Nicola Danti, Dennis de Jong, Pascal Durand, Vicky Ford, Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz, Evelyne Gebhardt, Antanas Guoga, Robert Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Philippe Juvin, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Jiří Maštálka, Marlene Mizzi, Eva Paunova, Jiří Pospíšil, Marcus Pretzell, Robert Rochefort, Virginie Rozière, Christel Schaldemose, Andreas Schwab, Olga Sehnalová, Ivan Štefanec, Catherine Stihler, Róza Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein, Mihai Țurcanu, Anneleen Van Bossuyt, Marco Zullo
Substitutes present for the final vote	Jan Philipp Albrecht, Lucy Anderson, Pascal Arimont, Ulrike Trebesius
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Clara Eugenia Aguilera García, Mario Borghezio, Roger Helmer, Flavio Zanonato