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Committee on Regional Development

2010/2277(INI)

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DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

on a single market for enterprises and growth
(2010/2277(INI))

Rapporteur: Sophie Auconie

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Regional Development calls on the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

A single market for enterprises and growth

1. Welcomes the Commission's proposals aimed at deepening the single market;
2. Stresses that in a globalised world the single market has to ensure the best possible business environment for enterprises, and to take the specific nature of SMEs into account in order to foster job creation, innovation and entrepreneurship in all EU regions, including rural areas; welcomes, therefore, the planned assessment of the 'Small Business Act' and the reinforcement of the 'Think Small First' principle;
3. Asks the Commission and the Member States to put an end to delays and flaws in the transposition of the single market directives, so as to ensure undistorted competition;
4. Stresses that single market accessibility for all EU regions is a prerequisite for the free movement of people, goods, capital and services, and thus for a strong and dynamic single market; points out, in this connection, the essential role played by the Union's regional policy in terms of developing infrastructure, particularly in the less developed and outermost regions; calls for the development of innovative sources of funding (such as public-private partnerships, project bonds and user charges); calls on the Commission and the Member States jointly to address the complexity of the rules governing revenue-generating projects;
5. Underlines that regional policy implementation is crucial for the success of the Europe 2020 strategy and the deepening of the single market; points out that EU structural funding should be allocated in a dynamic, forward-looking manner, i.e. so as to cushion further the possible adverse effects on regions of international trade agreements and to prepare EU regions for socioeconomic change; calls for a more user-friendly regional policy, but also for stricter rules against 'fund-shopping', by means of which some enterprises may misuse the Union's financial instruments;
6. Underlines that regions situated on the internal borders of the single market are the first to experience the consequences of removing those borders; asks the Commission to take into account concerns regarding the 'threshold effect' between border regions that enjoy comparable degrees of development but receive significantly different levels of financial support under the Union's regional policy; calls for a debate on creating a fair intermediate category between the current 'convergence' and 'regional competitiveness and employment' objectives;
7. Asks the Commission to clarify the 'conditionality principle' mentioned in the debate on the future of the Union's regional policy, which, if it is not adequately implemented, could lead to the imposition of damaging and useless sanctions on potential beneficiaries under regional policy, i.e. enterprises and EU citizens;

8. Stresses that services are a unique source of development for the single market; emphasises that the Services Directive is an essential step towards a true single market for services, and that the transposition process should take place as quickly as possible and in a transparent manner; underlines, in particular, the need for socially and regionally equitable access to services of general interest;

A single market for Europeans

9. Takes the view that territorial cooperation (including European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs) and macro-regional strategies) makes a decisive contribution to removing visible and invisible internal borders within the single market; calls, in this connection, for the post-2013 budget for territorial cooperation to be increased;
10. Welcomes the proposed creation of a European Foundation Statute; calls for the creation of a European Association Statute in order to facilitate cross-border citizens' initiatives and to contribute to the development of EU citizenship beyond frontiers;

Governance and partnership in the single market

11. Appreciates the Commission's multilevel governance approach, which is necessary in order to ensure genuine participation by regional and local political and economic actors;
12. Asks the Commission further to involve the Committee of the Regions and Parliament, and to work with them in order continuously to monitor the potential and actual consequences for regions of the deepening of the single market; welcomes, therefore, the idea of a single market forum.