

Single market for enterprises and growth

2010/2277(INI) - 06/04/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 570 votes to 44, with 28 abstentions, a resolution on a Single Market for Enterprises and Growth, in response to the Commission Communication entitled 'Towards a Single Market Act for a highly competitive social market economy. 50 proposals for improving our work, business and exchanges with one another?.

Members welcome the Communication 'Towards a Single Market Act?' and emphasise, in particular, the Commission's commitment, in this Communication, to promoting new approaches towards sustainable development.

In view of the economic and financial crisis, Parliament emphasises the importance of the Single Market for the competitiveness of EU enterprises and for the growth and stability of European economies. It calls on the Commission to submit an ambitious package of measures supported by a clear and coherent strategy to promote the competitiveness of the internal market.

It urges the Commission to conduct a financial audit of the EU's budget priorities for the next financial framework and to prioritise European added value projects able to enhance EU competitiveness and integration in the areas of research, knowledge and innovation.

The resolution focuses on the following key priorities:

Creating an EU Patent and a unified litigation system: the resolution stresses that the creation of the EU Patent and of a unified litigation system, as well as an improved system for the management of copyright, is indispensable for supporting innovation and creativity within the Single Market.

Financing innovation: Parliament calls on the Commission and the Member States to take due account of the importance of innovation for strong and more sustainable growth and job creation by ensuring that innovation is properly financed, in particular through:

- the creation of EU project bonds, especially in the areas of energy, transport and telecommunications, supporting the ecological transformation of our economies;
- a legislative framework to encourage venture capital funds to invest effectively throughout the EU. Incentives should be provided for long-term investment in innovative and job-creating sectors.

Fully operational internal energy market: Parliament points out the importance of a fully operational internal market for energy in order to achieve increased autonomy in energy supply. It considers that this could be achieved through a regional clustering approach, as well as through the diversification of energy routes and sources. It also stresses that the internal energy market should contribute to maintaining energy prices affordable for both consumers and businesses. It believes that, in order to achieve the EU's climate and energy objectives, a new approach is necessary in terms of applying adequate minimum duty rates on CO₂ emissions and on energy content. Parliament supports the initiative on the environmental footprint of products, and urges the Commission to quickly propose the establishment of a real common assessment and labelling system.

Stimulating e-commerce: Parliament urges the Commission to take all the necessary steps to enhance the confidence of businesses and consumers in e-commerce and stimulate its development in the Single Market. It stresses that an EU Action Plan against counterfeiting and piracy as well as a framework directive on the management of copyrights are crucial to reach this objective. The resolution stresses the imperative need to adapt EU Information and Communication Technology (ICT) standardisation policy to market and policy developments which will lead to achieving European policy goals requiring interoperability.

Improving SMEs participation in the Single Market: Members highlight that further action is needed to make the Single Market a better environment for SMEs. They consider that such action should include improving their access to capital markets, removing administrative and fiscal barriers to their cross-border activities by adopting a clearer VAT framework and a common consolidated corporate tax base, as well as the revision of the public procurement framework, to make procedures more flexible and less bureaucratic.

Rationalising public procurement procedures: the Commission is asked to review the legislation relating to public procurement and public and private partnership with a view to fostering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth within the Single Market and to stimulating cross-border public procurement. The resolution stresses the need for a clearer framework, providing legal certainty for both economic operators and contracting authorities. It strongly encourages Member States to use pre-commercial public procurement in order to stimulate the market for innovative and green technologies. It insists on the need to ensure reciprocity with industrialised countries and major emerging economies in the field of public procurement.

A Single Market for services: Members stress the need for full and proper implementation of the Services Directive, including the setting up of fully operational Points of Single Contact allowing for online completion of procedures and formalities, which can considerably reduce operational costs for enterprises and boost the Single Market for services. They call on the Commission to encourage the development of the business services sector and to take the necessary regulatory measures in order to protect businesses, especially SMEs, from unfair commercial practices by larger enterprises in the supply chain.