

Newsletter

Issue 109 - April 2020

SELECTED NEWS

Exchange of views with Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market, on the EU response to the COVID-19 outbreak



On 2 April at 10.30, IMCO Members will exchange views with Thierry Breton, Commissioner for the Internal Market, on the measures taken by the Commission to address the COVID-19 outbreak. On 23 March the IMCO Chair, Petra de Sutter, sent a letter on behalf of the committee to the Commission Executive Vice-President Margrethe Vestager, Commissioners Thierry Breton and Didier Reynders, as well as to the Croatian Presidency of the Council. In it she called for further actions to be taken to tackle the COVID-19 crisis and stressed the importance of using all the available tools of the Internal Market to ensure the free flow of goods and the provision of services and to enforce consumer protection. IMCO expressed solidarity with Member States and their affected citizens and emphasised the need to ensure that essential goods reach those who need them the most. In this regard, Member States were urged to follow the Commission's

guidelines for border management measures, implement the "open lanes" for freight transport for the supply of goods, and facilitate the provision of professional services across all EU internal borders. Furthermore, IMCO welcomed the launch of joint procurement procedures for specific medical supplies required to combat the virus, stressing the need to ensure a coordinated EU approach to innovative technologies that could provide immediate solutions for hospitals. The need to protect consumers in connection with the COVID-19 situation, in particular by preventing scams and price increases, was strongly underlined.

COVID-19: Impact on IMCO Committee meetings and other events



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Parliament has cancelled many types of public meetings until at least 30 April. This affects all IMCO public hearings, including all hearings foreseen for March 2020: the hearing on "Artificial Intelligence and blockchain: opportunities and challenges for the Single Market" planned for 18 March, and the hearing on "Consumer aspects around planned obsolescence: towards longer-lasting products" planned for 19 March were both cancelled. Under the current circumstances, IMCO will hold shortened Committee meetings, to discuss priority matters, with online participation by Members. The current planning for April extends to the extraordinary meeting on 2 April, as well one possible further meeting later in the month. These and other Committee meetings will be webstreamed to the public as usual.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

(2 APRIL 2020)

[Watch the committee meeting live](#)

Artificial intelligence in education, culture and the audiovisual sector – consideration of draft opinion



On 2 April, IMCO Rapporteur Kim Van Sparrentak will present her [draft opinion](#) on "Artificial intelligence in education, culture and the audiovisual sector". The opinion will make suggestions to the CULT committee on the impact AI might have on education, culture and the audiovisual sectors and the regulatory challenges the Union will have to face in this regard, looking upon these issues from the IMCO perspective. The draft opinion focuses on the need to ensure algorithm transparency, a suitable framework for the public procurement for public educators, and a purposeful and ethical use of AI in the education sector.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Kim VAN SPARRENTAK \(Greens/EFA\)](#)

Recommendations on the negotiations for a new partnership with the UK – consideration of draft opinion



On 2 April, IMCO will consider the [draft opinion](#) to the AFET/INTA report on the Recommendations on the negotiations for a new partnership with the UK. Following the Council decision authorising the opening of negotiations on 25 February

2020 and the first round of negotiations already held, numerous committees will provide opinions under Rule 56 RoP in their respective areas of competence. The draft opinion by Mr Peeters addresses particular areas of interest to IMCO, namely the internal market (goods and services), customs cooperation and consumer policy. The deadline for amendments is set for 7 April 2020, while plenary adoption for the AFET/INTA report is currently scheduled for 3 June 2020.

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

UPDATE ON IMCO TRILOGUES

Motor Insurance Directive

The second trilogue on the proposal amending the Motor Insurance Directive took place on 4 March. The proposal seeks to amend the current Directive in five areas, namely the insolvency of the insurer, claims-history statements, risks due to uninsured driving, minimum amounts of cover and the scope of the Directive. The second trilogue was held in a constructive atmosphere and certain progress was made on a number of political issues. The technical level was mandated to finalise the text on items provisionally agreed and look for possible ways forward on issues where it was feasible to explore a compromise. The next trilogue, foreseen to take place on 25 March 2020, has been cancelled due to the developing COVID-19 crisis, and no new date has been set yet.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Dita CHARANZOVÁ \(RENEW\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

Rail passengers' rights and obligations (recast)

The second trilogue on the revision of the Regulation on rail passengers' rights and obligations took place at the Parliament premises in Brussels on 18 February. The agenda foresaw discussion on several topics, including the exemption for countries without railways, the assistance to persons with disabilities, through ticketing, and standard complaint and compensation forms. The progress was limited, as on many proposals made by the Parliament the Croatian Presidency had to revert to consult Member States for consultation. The technical level was mandated to continue negotiations. The third trilogue, foreseen to take place on 25 March 2020, has been cancelled due to the developing COVID-19 crisis, and no new date has been set yet.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Kateřina KONEČNÁ \(Greens/EFA\)](#) [Procedure file](#)

Representative actions for the protection of the collective interests of consumers

The second trilogue on this proposal for a Directive took place on 2 March 2020. Regarding the most significant change introduced by the Council on the distinction between domestic and cross-border actions, the EP Rapporteur, Geoffroy Didier, indicated the conditions under which such a split could be considered by the Parliament. These include the existence of at least one collective redress mechanism and one qualified entity per Member State, sufficient funding for qualified entities, avoidance of any conflict of interest and transparency for third party funding, acceptance of the loser pays principle, acceptable transposition and application deadlines, and deletion of the review clause regarding air and rail passengers rules. The next trilogues, foreseen to take place on 1 and 30 April, have been cancelled due to the developing COVID-19 crisis, and no new date has been set yet.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Geoffroy DIDIER \(EPP\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

LAST COMMITTEE MEETING

(17 - 18 FEBRUARY 2020)

Presentation by Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market, of the new initiatives in the digital sector

During an extraordinary joint IMCO-ITRE meeting held on 19 February, Mr Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market, presented the digital package adopted by the Commission on that day entitled, 'Shaping Europe's digital future'. Further legislative proposals in this area can be expected for the end of 2020 and throughout the remainder of this term. The digital challenges ahead will be a top priority for the IMCO Committee.

Emissions from light passenger and commercial vehicles - vote



On 18 February IMCO adopted an opinion on the proposal for type approval of vehicles with respect to emissions from light vehicles and on access to repair and maintenance information ("Real

Driving Emissions 2"). The opinion consists of five amendments in areas of consumer protection and access to repair and maintenance information. It received a large majority of 35 votes in favour, one against and three abstentions. The vote in the lead committee, ENVI, was scheduled to take place on 18 March, but this has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Anna Cavazzini \(Greens/EFA\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

Third annual review of the functioning of the EU-U.S. Privacy Shield – COM presentation



On 18 February, the European Commission made a presentation to IMCO Members on the implementation and enforcement of the [EU-U.S. Privacy Shield framework](#) in its third year of operation. The findings are based on information gathered from

relevant stakeholders and U.S. authorities, and have been further informed by publicly available material, such as court decisions, implementing rules and procedures of relevant U.S. authorities, reports and studies from non-governmental organisations, transparency reports issued by Privacy Shield-certified companies, annual reports from independent recourse mechanisms, as well as media reports. MEPs had a fruitful exchange of views with Commission officials on the overall functioning of the framework.

EVENTS

Hearing on Digital advertising and consumer information

On 17 February, IMCO held a hearing on digital advertising and consumer information. The hearing allowed Members to hear the views of a range of experts and stakeholders on the challenges consumers face in an advertising environment that is shifting from the traditional concept of "consumer" to "user". The speakers presented their views under two panels, one discussing how consumers are informed and whether they have a choice when it comes to online profiling, and the second addressing the question whether consumers and especially vulnerable groups are protected from disguised digital advertising. The experts agreed that current EU rules in place already offer certain rights and protections to consumers, and that the main challenge is one of correct and efficient enforcement. Another conclusion which emerged was that the forthcoming proposal on the Digital Services Act should also address data ecosystem challenges.

Workshop on Digital Service Act

The workshop "E-commerce rules, fit for the digital age" took place on 18 February. It was organised by the Policy Department in close cooperation with the Secretariat of the IMCO Committee, and was intended to inform the work of IMCO on a file of key importance in this legislative term: the Digital Services Act. The topics under discussion included an assessment of the e-Commerce Directive 20 years after its adoption and the challenges and opportunities brought by new technologies. The Workshop was presided over by IMCO Chair, Petra de Sutter, and by Alex Agius Saliba, rapporteur of IMCO's legislative own-initiative report on the Digital Services Act. The Workshop was very well attended, and the IMCO Chair opened the debate to all participants in the room.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Alex Agius Saliba](#)

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ABOUT THE EDITOR:

European Parliament
Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union
Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee
Head of Unit / Editor: Panos Konstantopoulos
Responsible administrator: Mark Beamish
Layout: Gina Duma

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Closure date of the current issue: 31 March 2020

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