

Newsletter

Issue 107 - January 2020

WORD FROM THE CHAIR – IMCO MARKS 15-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

For years we have been referring to the mythical year 2020 as a long-term deadline for all sorts of policy objectives. 2020 has now started and many objectives are still to be achieved. 2030 and 2050 have become our new 2020, but we have no time to waste.

Since the start of the new term, we have been negotiating trilogues on the Single Market Programme and Customs Programme and I am looking forward to closing the MFF-related negotiations later this year.

Other work on issues that go to the core of IMCO's remit is well underway: we are preparing a resolution on the future Digital Service Act, as well as resolutions on a sustainable single market, on strengthening the free movement of services and on product safety.

The arrival of 2020 is also a good moment to mark our committee's recent 15th anniversary! IMCO was created in 2004 to take on responsibility for internal market and consumer protection matters, which had previously been dealt with by the JURI and ENVI committees respectively.

15 years later, IMCO plays a key role in Parliament's affairs, being involved in the hearings of no fewer than four Commissioners, including Margrethe Vestager, who is now Executive Vice-President for a Europe fit for the Digital Age. We look forward to a fruitful cooperation with all the Commissioners and we have already planned exchanges of views with them in the coming meetings of the IMCO Committee.

I believe I can speak for all previous IMCO Chairs, when I say that it is a true honour to be able to chair a committee that is at the legislative forefront of an economy and society in full transition.

IMCO Committee Chairs: 2004 – 2019



Phillip Whitehead
2004 - 2005



Arlene McCarthy
2006 - 2009



Malcolm Harbour
2009 - 2014



Vicky Ford
2014 - 2017



Anneleen Van Bossuyt
2017 - 2019



Petra de Sutter
2019 -

Presentation of the Council Presidency's programme



On 22 January, IMCO will welcome Darko Horvat, Croatian Minister of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts, to present the Croatian Council Presidency's programme. From 1 January to 30 June 2020, Croatia will hold the rotating [Council Presidency](#) for the first time since joining the European Union in 2013. The four main priority areas of the Croatian presidency are "a Europe that is developing"; "a Europe that connects"; "a Europe that protects"; and "an influential Europe". Following Mr. Horvat's opening remarks, IMCO Members will have the opportunity to enter into a debate with the Minister on matters and files of interest to IMCO.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

(22 - 23 JANUARY 2020)

[Watch the committee meeting live](#)

Legislative scrutiny: Commission evaluation report on Construction Products Regulation

On 22 January IMCO committee is holding a legislative scrutiny session on the status of implementation of the Construction Products Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 305/2011). A representative of DG GROW will address the Committee, followed by a debate with Members. The purpose of the session is to allow Members to scrutinise the Commission's [evaluation of the Regulation](#). In this context, particular attention might be also paid to standardisation issues, as detailed in the [report on tasks under the Regulation](#) that receive Union financing. That report was adopted at the same time as the evaluation.

Oral question on automated decision-making processes

On 23 January, IMCO Members are due to adopt a "question for oral answer", under Rule 136 of the Rules of Procedure, on the topic of AI and automated decision-making processes. The question is addressed to the Commission and, once tabled to plenary, a Member of the College of Commissioners will be required to provide an oral answer followed by a debate with Members. The oral question will be accompanied by a motion for resolution to be adopted at the end of the debate. The focus of the oral question and resolution is on promoting consumer choice, trust and welfare and reviewing rules on product safety and liability, among other things.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Petra DE Sutter \(Chair\)](#)

[eMeeting page](#)

Emissions from light passenger and commercial vehicles

On 23 January IMCO will consider the amendments tabled by Members to the Commission's proposal for a regulation on motor vehicle emissions. The aim of the proposal is to control the emissions of motor vehicles in order to achieve fundamental air quality objectives, and to clarify the legal framework for repair and maintenance information. The amendments tabled aim primarily at ensuring that SMEs will enjoy a level playing field as concerns access to repair and maintenance information, and at underlining the need for better consumer protection. The vote on the draft Opinion and amendments in IMCO is scheduled for February 2020.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Anna Cavazzini \(Verts/ALE\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

Competition policy report 2018

On 23 January, IMCO is due to adopt its Opinion on the [Commission's annual competition policy report 2018](#), which was published in July 2019. The Commission's annual report is a review of its enforcement activities on competition law and policy. IMCO's opinion will focus on developments relating to the functioning and completion of the single market, in particular consumer welfare, DSM, big data, and platforms. The Opinion will take the form of a letter from the Chair and will be added as an annex to the report prepared by ECON, the lead committee.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Petra DE Sutter \(Chair\)](#)

Legislative scrutiny: NIS Directive



On 22 January, a Commission representative from DG CNECT will update IMCO Members on the status of implementation of Directive (EU) 2016/1148 concerning cybersecurity (the NIS Directive). The NIS Directive was the EU's first internal market instrument with the aim of improving the resilience of the EU against cyber-security risks. Under the Directive, Member States have to identify operators in critical sectors like energy and transport that are covered by the obligations in the Directive. On 28 October 2019 the Commission published [a report](#) that assesses the consistency of Member State approaches to this process of identification.

[Link to the directive](#)

JRC study on the dual quality of food products in the single market



On 23 January, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) will present its latest work on dual quality to the IMCO Committee, in the form of a study on the economic assessment of the dual quality of food products in the single market. This study, which is yet to be published, will look at the impact of dual quality practices on consumer choice and the behaviour of undertakings. The work was funded under a pilot project adopted by the European Parliament for the 2018 and 2019 EU budgets. It builds on the [JRC's report of June 2019](#), which contained the results of the testing conducted by the JRC on a range of products to determine the incidence of products with identical packaging, but different composition.

LAST COMMITTEE MEETING

(4 DECEMBER 2019)

Presentation of Commission plans to review Machinery Directive

On 4 December, the Head of Unit responsible for the Machinery Directive (Directive 2006/42/EC) at DG GROW updated IMCO Members on the Commission's plans for a revision of the Directive. Member heard that the Directive was currently not aligned to the "New Legislative Framework", that greater clarity was called for in terms of its scope and definitions, and that some changes might be necessary to cater for emerging digital technologies, like AI, IoT and developments in robotics. An impact assessment study is due to be published by the Commission in the first quarter of 2020.

[Revision of Directive](#)

Agreement on the withdrawal of the UK from the EU and the European Atomic Energy Community

On 4 December 2019, IMCO voted on its opinion to the AFCO consent procedure on the UK's Withdrawal Agreement (2018/0427(NLE)) and adopted it by a large majority (37/0/4). The opinion, in the form of a letter from the Chair, addressed various issues, such as the internal market, customs and consumer policy, while also paying special attention to the Northern Ireland Protocol. IMCO called on AFCO to recommend to give consent to the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the UK's Withdrawal Agreement. The vote in AFCO is scheduled for 23 January 2020.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Petra DE Sutter \(Chair\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

UPDATE ON IMCO TRILOGUES

Preventing the dissemination of terrorist content online

On 22 January, the IMCO Rapporteur Mr Marcel Kolaja will report back on the third trilogue on the Regulation on preventing the dissemination of terrorist content online. At the trilogue, which was held on 12 December 2019 and led by the LIBE rapporteur, various issues were discussed, such as the definitions of terrorist content, removal orders, duties of care and proactive measures. A fourth trilogue will be scheduled with the Croatian presidency.

EVENTS

Hearing on Product Liability Directive

On 22 January IMCO is holding a [public hearing entitled: "Product Liability Directive: protecting consumers in the Digital Single Market"](#). Members will hear the views of business, consumers associations and academia on the need to review the Product Liability Directive and on related challenges in the new digital age. It will also offer the opportunity to hear the Commission's conclusions of its evaluation work and results achieved in the [Expert group on liability and new technologies](#).



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