

Newsletter

Issue 117 - March 2021

SELECTED NEWS

Exchange of views with Didier Reynders, Commissioner for Justice



On 17 March, IMCO will hold an exchange of views with Commissioner Reynders as part of the Structured Dialogue. Mr Reynders will update IMCO Members on the current priorities of EU consumer policy, notably in the area of the green and digital transitions. The Commissioner will present the Commission's work on upcoming legislative files, as announced in the New Consumer Agenda adopted in November 2020. Regarding the topic of green transition, the Commission will

present an initiative on "empowering consumers in the green transition", which aims at ensuring that consumers obtain trustworthy and relevant information on product durability. In the digital area, the Commission is working on several proposals in particular on product safety and consumer finance, to ensure that consumers benefit from a comparable level of protection and fairness off- and online. The Commissioner may also inform Members about the ongoing work on consumer protection in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regulation concerning batteries and waste batteries, repealing Directive 2006/66/EC and amending Regulation



The Commission adopted the proposal on 10 December 2020, as a part of the Circular Economy Action Plan, to replace the current EU legislative framework on batteries. The new provisions aim, as a primary objective, to strengthen the functioning of the EU internal market for batteries by addressing the market fragmentation and insufficient level of information

The new regulation would create a level playing field in the internal market, through a harmonised set of rules and standards for batteries, promote the circular economy through recycling, and reduce the environmental and social impacts of batteries throughout their lifecycle. Mr Antonius Manders (EPP) is the IMCO Rapporteur for the proposal. Strong political commitment is emerging to modernise the legislative framework for batteries, as a key sector for sustainable growth in the EU.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Antonius Manders \(EPP\)](#)

Serious cross-border threats to health



On 17 March, IMCO will consider the draft legislative opinion to ENVI by Mr Rasmus Andresen (Greens/EFA) on serious cross-border threats to health. Put forward by the Commission on 11 November 2020, this proposal provides a strengthened framework for health crisis preparedness and response at the EU level by addressing weaknesses exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. For IMCO it is particularly important that the proposal lays down rules on joint procurement of medical countermeasures. As serious cross-border threats to health are not limited to EU borders, joint procurement of medical countermeasures is to be extended to include EFTA and EU candidate countries. In addition, it is proposed that joint procurement procedure includes an exclusivity clause providing countries participating in a joint procurement shall not run parallel negotiation processes for the same product.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Rasmus Andresen \(Greens/EFA\)](#)

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

(17 - 18 MARCH 2021)

[Watch the committee meeting live](#)

Shaping the digital future of Europe: removing barriers to the functioning of the digital single market and improving the use of AI for European consumer



On 17 March, IMCO will consider draft compromise amendments to its own-initiative report by Ms Deirdre Clune (EPP) on shaping the digital future of Europe. The

rappporteur drafted 27 compromise amendments which address issues such as the need to remove barriers to the functioning of the internal market, particularly for SMEs; to ensure protection of consumers and businesses in the digital environment; to set up the base for the EU to become a world leader in digital innovation; and to make sure that new technologies, data and AI are key enablers of the transition to a circular economy. IMCO will vote on the draft report on 14/15 April.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Deirdre Clune \(EPP\)](#)

EU-EEA-Switzerland: Internal market cooperation in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the 25 years of efforts to fully implement internal market rules



On 17 March, IMCO will vote on an Oral Question (OQ) with a Motion (MfR) on the relations between the EU, the EEA and Switzerland in terms of internal market integration

and cooperation. The OQ with MfR seeks to elaborate on the importance of the EEA Agreement and the EU-Switzerland Institutional Framework Agreement, as well as the relation to the microstates of Andorra, Monaco and San Marino. Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic has shown that measures taken at Member State level can jeopardize the general principles of internal market cooperation, including the free movement of goods, services and persons within the internal market and between the EU, the EEA and Switzerland. Therefore, the OQ with MfR investigates also how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected EU-EEA-Switzerland relations from an internal market perspective.

European Union regulatory fitness and subsidiarity and proportionality - report on Better Law Making covering the years 2017, 2018 and 2019



On 17 March, IMCO will consider amendments and compromise amendments on its draft opinion to JURI on European Union regulatory fitness and subsidiarity and proportionality. The

deadline for amendments on the draft opinion was on 24 February and 61 amendments were tabled in total. Among others, the draft opinion of the Rapporteur Ms Barbara Thaler (EPP) focuses on effective better law-making tools that take subsidiarity and proportionality fully into account when drawing up scientifically based and balanced legislation, particularly for consumers and SMEs and on internal market objectives such as improving competitiveness, digitalisation, sustainability and consumer protection that should be underpinned by the enhanced use of scrutiny instruments such as the regulatory fitness and performance programme (REFIT) and the Regulatory Scrutiny Board. IMCO will vote on the draft opinion on 14/15 April and the vote in JURI is foreseen in May 2021.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Barbara Thaler \(EPP\)](#)

Consumer protection in the context of digitalisation of retail financial Services (CCD and DMFSD) during the Covid-19 pandemic



On 18 March, the IMCO Committee will hold a public hearing on consumer protection in the context of digitalisation of retail financial services during the Covid-19 pandemic. The hearing will offer Members the chance

to hear the views of a range of experts and stakeholders in order to assess the challenges that the digitalisation of consumer financial services has brought in the course of the current pandemic. The hearing will focus on the upcoming revision of the Consumer Credit Directive (CCD) and the Distance Marketing of Consumer Financial Services Directive (DMFSD), planned for adoption in the Q2 2021 and Q4 2021, and will assess how the financial services sector has been transformed by the ongoing digital transition.

Presentation of the PolDep Study on Legal obstacles in Member States to Single Market rules



The authors of the study (which will be presented in IMCO on 17 March) focus on various aspects of obstacles related to free movement of goods and services, the right to establishment, the Digital Single Market, consumer protection and public procurement. 82% of products traded in the Single Market are subject to harmonised rules and 18% of intra-EU trade in goods fall under mutual recognition. Member States' technical rules have improved in quality over recent years, reflected by a decrease in detailed opinions issued by the Commission under the procedure to notify the EU of national technical rules. However, there are still new instances, year after year, of national technical rules that appear to be contrary to EU law.

LAST COMMITTEE MEETING

(22 / 23 FEBRUARY 2021)

Exchange of views with Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice President of the European Commission for a Europe Fit for the Digital Age



On 23 February 2021, Vice President Margrethe Vestager presented two legislative proposals put forward by the Commission on 15 December 2020: the proposal for a Digital Markets Act (DMA) and the proposal for a Digital Services Act (DSA). Ms Vestager thanked IMCO for its INI report on the DSA, which has been taken into account when developing the proposals for both regulations. Members raised questions concerning transparency of algorithms, interoperability, data portability, the need to reinforce consumer protection, country of origin principle, online targeted advertising, notifications of mergers by gatekeepers, complimentary role between competition law and the DMA and on the role for SMEs.

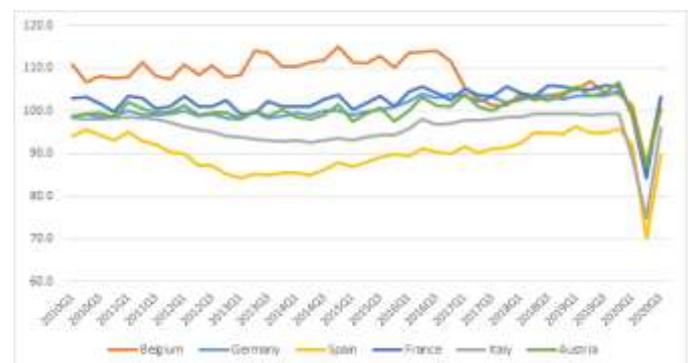
Implementation of Directive 2009/81/EC, concerning procurement in the fields of defence and security, and of Directive 2009/43/EC, concerning the transfer of defence-related products



On 22 February, IMCO adopted the Implementation Report of the 'Defence Procurement Directive' and the 'Transfers Directive' in the Member

States. The draft report highlights the need to ensure better enforcement and stronger application of the directives, the need to improve the level of participation of SMEs in the defence market, the importance of transparency and access to data and the correct usage of exemptions. It also points out that no revision of these directives is necessary since the existing regulatory framework should be sufficient if correctly implemented and properly used. All twelve compromise amendments were adopted. The draft report was adopted by 32 votes in favour, 3 votes against and 10 abstentions. The vote in Plenary is planned for March II 2021.

Presentation of Policy Department study on Analysis of the COVID 19 impact



The authors of the study, which was presented on 22 February 2021, underlined that the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 crisis have been enormous. Among their key findings were that in general the EU's response to the crisis was good and sensible, with the noteworthy exception of vaccines orders which were placed much too late. Additionally, the Member States closure of borders has been efficient in most cases, but not in all. Members found the study interesting and timely and asked for a follow-up study once the pandemic is over in order to evaluate the whole spectrum of this phenomenon.

UPDATE ON IMCO TRILOGUES

Insurance against civil liability in respect of the use of motor vehicles, and the enforcement of the obligation to ensure against such liability (Motor Insurance Directive)



On 18 March 2021, IMCO rapporteur Ms Dita Charanzová (Renew) will report back to the IMCO Committee on the third trilogue on the proposal amending the Motor Insurance Directive. The trilogue is set to take place the day before, on 17 March 2021. 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.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Dita Charanzová \(Renew\)](#)

Establishing, as part of the Integrated Border Management Fund, the instrument for financial support for customs control equipment



On 16 March, the second trilogue on the MFF sectoral proposal for establishing the Instrument for financial support for customs control equipment will take place, for which the rapporteur, Mr Jiří Pospíšil (EPP) is expected to report back to Committee on 17 March. The second trilogue is expected to be the final trilogue, and will therefore deal with the remaining unresolved items, such as the governance of the programme, including discussions on delegated vs. implementing acts, the budget of the Instrument, as well as end dates and duration of the Instrument. Throughout the negotiations, the main EP priorities have been ensuring that the equipment financed under the Instrument is used primarily for customs control, as well as ensuring transparency of the actions and results of the Instrument.

DRAFTSPERSON: [Jiří Pospíšil \(EPP\)](#)

OTHERS NEWS

Next IMCO Committee meetings:

Wednesday 14 April 2021, 13.45 – 15.45 and 16.45 – 18.45

Thursday 15 April 2021, 09.30 - 12.30

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