



Commissioner Elżbieta Bienkowska

Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

**Exchange of views with the Committee on Internal Market and
Consumer Protection (IMCO)**

6 May 2015

European Parliament – Room 4Q1, 14.00-15.00

check against delivery

SPEAKING POINTS

Introduction

Madam Chair, Honourable Members,

Thank you for inviting me here today for our structured dialogue.

When I was before you for my nomination, I promised to meet with you regularly.

I am sticking to that promise.

I will begin by outlining the strategy for a Digital Single Market that we adopted this morning.

I will then give you a sense of our current thinking on this autumn's Internal Market Strategy.

And I will conclude by addressing a number of ongoing files.

PART I – DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET

Let me begin with the Digital Single Market.

This morning the College adopted the package.

It is the result of intensive work led by my colleague Andrus Ansip.

I am pleased with the outcome.

It will be good for consumers, good for businesses and good for jobs.

If implemented, it will enable Europe to fulfil its digital potential.

There are a number of issues of interest to you.

First, we will propose cross-border e-commerce rules that consumers and businesses can trust.

The evidence is clear.

The rules on selling cross-border online are too complex and different between Member States.

37% of firms in the EU don't know what rules to follow if they sell cross-border...

As a result, many of them choose not to sell.

Consumers have less choice, and can't benefit from lower prices.

Before the end of this year, we will make a proposal that does two things.

It will provide clear rules for the online purchase of digital content.

And it will allow sellers to rely on their national laws for on-line sales of tangible goods.

We will do this by harmonising mandatory EU contractual rights protecting the consumer.

We will take a balanced approach.

Second, we are delivering on our promise to end unjustified geoblocking.

We have been fighting unjustified discrimination of the consumers based on their nationality and residence.

Remember for example the car hire case last summer.

We will analyse how to limit the accepted justifications for discrimination and work on improving enforcement of Article 20 of the Services Directive.

Third, we are tackling parcel delivery.

Consumers and businesses are fed up with expensive, inconvenient and low quality delivery and return options.

We have been working on this under the 2013 Roadmap, but this will not solve all the problems.

We need additional measures to make pricing transparent and reflect actual costs and to strengthen regulatory oversight.

We will therefore launch a public consultation and make a comprehensive impact assessment.

Fourth, we are addressing platforms.

The College has already sent a statement of objections in the Google Case.

But there are other platforms and other issues such as:

- the use of collected data by platforms;
- restrictions on individuals and businesses transferring from one platform to another;
- issues between the platforms and SMEs.

We must tread carefully.

There are many aspects that we do not know enough about.

So we will engage extensively with stakeholders.

Fifth, we are addressing e-Government.

There is no point in encouraging our businesses to digitise, only for our authorities to be stuck in the Stone Age.

It is wasting time and money.

Authorities must do better and the Commission will take the lead.

In particular, we must ensure that businesses are able to find all the information they need in one place.

And it must be easy to understand.

Finally, we must help our businesses make the shift to digital.

In a few weeks, I will send a letter to Council of Ministers and to the Parliament where among other

things I will set out some elements on how we will support this.

This is an ambitious agenda. But it is a necessary one.

PART II – INTERNAL MARKET STRATEGY

We will build on this when we launch our Internal Market Strategy later this year.

We all agree that the Internal Market is still far from delivering its potential.

Madam Chair, you and I were in Riga in March.

We heard about the barriers, restrictions and inefficiencies faced by our companies and professionals.

We must turn this around.

We are taking a careful approach.

We are examining the evidence on the main gaps and barriers in the Internal Market.

We are listening to stakeholders: consumers, and businesses, in particular SMEs.

We are considering the impact of any possible solutions.

Our approach must and will be extremely practical.

And it must be inclusive.

You will understand that I cannot say at this stage what our strategy will contain.

But I thought that it would be useful if I outlined three themes that we need to tackle.

First, we need to give our professionals and entrepreneurs greater freedom to offer their services across Europe.

We need a Europe where our professionals can move where they want and where they are needed.

Not where bureaucrats decide they can go.

Since last year, Member States have been carrying out a mutual evaluation exercise on regulated professions.

We need to see how we can take this further.

We also need a Europe in which our start-ups and entrepreneurs are free to innovate.

That includes new forms of business models, including the sharing economy.

We need to find ways for new products and business models to access the market quickly.

We can do that without lowering consumer protection or tax revenue.

We need to act carefully and find a good solution.

A second theme is that we need to create opportunities for our businesses.

A core area is Services.

European services providers still face too many regulatory and administrative hurdles when seeking to provide services cross-border.

We need to end this. We also need to create the conditions for our retail services to thrive.

We also need to ensure that those companies treat customers fairly.

Too many businesses commonly differentiate between consumers, based on their country of residence.

Some companies charge different prices depending on the consumer's country of residence.

We have to reverse this.

We must also ensure that our new rules on public procurement deliver their potential.

We have to put more efforts into the implementation process.

This leads me to the third theme: ensuring delivery.

It is no good us spending years negotiating over proposals only to see them undercut through poor implementation and enforcement.

So part of our response must be to ensure that the Services Directive is implemented properly.

We must also ensure that mutual recognition of services actually takes place.

This means looking at those key sectors where it does not.

It means being more active on the mutual recognition of goods.

This is often undermined by legal uncertainty, imperfect implementation of EU rules and obstacles created by private operators.

This affects many sectors, impacting on business opportunities.

We need to sort this out.

But it also means being more aggressive and targeted on enforcement and infringement policy.

We can do a lot together in the "scrutiny" exercise.

You have set up a dialogue with my services on the implementation of Public Procurement and Professional Qualifications directives.

This is an excellent practice that we must continue.

We are also rethinking our enforcement policy.

We should prioritize complaints and infringement cases.

There are now 115 pending cases (42% on services and 41% on goods).

Our goal is to make speedy progress on the most important ones.

PART III- FINALIZE THE ONGOING FILES

Madam Chair, honourable members, these are some indications of our thinking.

I would value your input.

But we must not lose focus on the proposals which are already on the table.

So let me touch on six of these.

First, e-call.

I welcome our final agreement last week.

When we work together, we can deliver results for our citizens.

It is a good example for other files.

Second, the product safety and market surveillance package.

I know that you agree on how important this is for our Internal Market.

The Commission will release its final study report on this soon.

We provided a further assessment of the costs and benefits of the mandatory country of origin labelling.

I hope that it will serve as a good basis for further discussions.

Third, car registration

I am grateful for IMCO's support to the proposal and for your push to resume trilogue discussions with the Council.

We are ready to help.

Fourth, the technical harmonization files.

We are close to an agreement on the three components of this package.

I count on your support in the forthcoming trilogues.

Fifth, Unfair Trading Practices.

Last year, we issued a Communication on this.

It provides a clear way forward with a system based on effective enforcement measures at national level and a voluntary approach.

We will assess these in the coming months. I will report our findings early next year.

We will see if any further actions are needed.

Again, I hope the Parliament will continue to support us.

Finally, on intellectual property, I am grateful for IMCO's input to ongoing reforms.

Conclusion: making it work

Madam Chair, honourable members, these files show how and why we need to work together.

I welcome your support and look forward to our continued and close cooperation.

The Commission must and will play our full role.

We have dedicated and talented staff.

We need to use them as effectively as possible to generate the jobs that our people need.

They need to work and think together, rather than in little boxes.

Goods and Services.

Industry and Internal Market.

Policy and enforcement.

So two weeks ago, we reorganised the DG to help it deliver.

The new DG will be more focused and more practical.

It will be a DG that is ready for the digital modernisation agenda.

It will be a DG that is practical on the Single Market.

It will be a DG that delivers.

Thank you very much.