

28 October 1999

B5-0204/1999

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Oral Question B5-0032/1999

pursuant to Rule 42(5) of the Rules of Procedure

by Mrs Palacio Vallelersundi

on behalf of the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Internal Market

on the strategy for Europe's single market

B5-0204/1999

Resolution on the strategy for Europe's single market

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 14 of the EC Treaty,
 - having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the Strategy for Europe's Single Market (COM(1999) 464) and the presentation of that communication given by Commissioner Bolkestein on 5 October 1999 to the Committee for Legal Affairs and the Internal Market,
1. Welcomes the structure set in place by the Commission's Strategy for Europe's Internal Market, which is centered around the citizen and small and medium-sized enterprises and incorporates operational objectives directed at sustainable development, protecting consumer interests, supporting employment and co-ordinating social protection and serving – often interdependent – strategic objectives, and applauds the innovative switch from a linear approach to an annual Single Market cycle, with its emphasis on target actions with agreed deadlines and a measurable output, which can be reviewed and, where necessary, adjusted;
 2. Notes the Commission's willingness to take account of Parliament's views in the annual Single Market Strategy and stresses that Parliament should be fully associated in the process of selecting and reviewing target actions so as to ensure, in particular, transparency for the citizen and small and medium-sized enterprises;
 3. Recognises the increased importance of non-legislative target actions, but points out that it must not detract from Parliament's role of co-legislator with the Council at the risk of creating a law of a status which is uncertain, less mandatory and less sure, resulting in fictitious harmonisation and uncertain transposition in the national legal orders, and calls on the Commission to ensure that, in the non-legislative field, Parliament's views are taken into account as they are in the codecision procedure;
 4. Trusts that the Strategy will result in a more unified, less piecemeal approach, constituting a genuine and coherent programme of legislative and non-legislative action, which achieves the strategic objectives of:

- (a) meeting the needs of citizens, especially by making them aware of their rights, particularly through the Dialogue with Citizens, and empowering them by affording them means of redress in the shape of innovative dispute resolution mechanisms; in this connection, the Commission is urged to include among its target actions pilot projects for an out-of-court dispute settlement scheme, a system of quality labels and a code of conduct for electronic commerce and the introduction of product package inserts setting out consumers' rights;

as regards free movement of persons, creating a level of social protection which will enable them to move within the European Union without suffering culturally or in their family lives, and directing specific action towards integrating migrants into their new environments;

increasing the speed and efficiency of infringement proceedings against defaulting Member States where the rights of European Union citizens exercised within the Internal Market are impinged upon or denied; ensuring that rights involving freedom of movement are speedily and effectively enforced in favour of individuals;

- (b) building a shared commitment to the active enforcement of Single Market rules, which is in every interest of the Member States and their citizens and businesses, particularly through the target action of bringing greater legal certainty and transparency to infringement proceedings; in the context of encouraging creativity and innovation, the Commission is urged, in selecting initiatives, to give European law the profile which it warrants, in particular in the sphere of the protection of intellectual property, having regard to any initiatives of the European Parliament;
- (c) improving the business environment, especially through the target action of introducing a simplified, accelerated procedure for the codification of Single Market legislation and the pursuit and enhancement of the SLIM programme together with an active commitment to improving the quality of legislation, since it is vital to have a coherent and simplified framework of law for the Single Market, which is readily accessible and comprehensible, while minimising the regulatory burden; furthermore, the importance of allowing market forces to operate in the levelling of indirect taxes and the elimination of market distorting national subsidies cannot be too highly stressed in this connection;

continuing to improve and modernise competition law and the law on state aid, having regard in particular to the effects on competition of the process of industrial concentration;

ensuring that in the achievement of the Internal Market a balance is struck between market freedom and the need to protect the environment, consumer health and confidence, and social and cultural priorities, including universal service provision;

emphasising the need for a coherent approach to Internet regulation, including electronic commerce, intellectual property, distance selling and data protection, in

order to protect consumer rights and ensure adequate rules of liability in the development and exercise of the Internal Market;

- (d) shaping the multilateral trading system by asserting and exploiting the achievements of the Single Market, setting the standard for the protection of intellectual property and taking the lead in adopting a coherent approach to the Information Society; in this connection, a strong, coherent approach must be adopted for the Trans-Atlantic Dialogue, with Europe showing strong leadership internationally;
 - (e) above all, creating a genuine legal order for the Internal Market, underscoring its principles and reflecting a strong overall approach which is consistent and coherent, avoids discrepancies between measures adopted in different sectors and achieves the aims set out above with an adequate level of harmonisation and applying the principles of mutual recognition and country of origin, where appropriate.
5. Deems it essential that Parliament be formally apprised of the final version of the Strategy for Europe's Internal Market which is to include a description of the individual target actions;
6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments of the Member States.