28.9.2011

OPINION

of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

on the European Semester for Economic Policy Coordination (2011/2071(INI))

Rapporteur: Catherine Stihler
SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection calls on the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Calls on the European Council and the Commission to focus more, within the European Semester, on the Single Market which constitutes the economic pillar of the EU, in order to tap the full potential of the internal market, attract public and private capital to finance infrastructural and innovative projects and promote efficient use of energy; stresses that the Single Market must be at the heart of a European Economic Governance focused on the aim of fostering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, employment and social cohesion by overcoming internal imbalances, creating economic convergence and boosting competitiveness;

2. Considers that the role of the European Parliament within the European Semester should be urgently clarified and that the economic dialogue should aim at reinforcing the democratic legitimacy of the process through proper parliamentary scrutiny; calls on the Commission to present each January to all relevant parliamentary committees, including its committee responsible for the internal market, the results of the previous European Semester and the new Annual Growth Survey, having integrated the detailed committee input on each of these two processes;

3. Asks that each Spring Session of the European Council be partly devoted to assessing the state of the Single Market and backed by a monitoring process; calls on the President of the European Council to present annually to the Parliament the actions to be taken following the Spring European Council including in the area of the Single Market;

4. Calls on the Commission to carry out an annual assessment of the Single Market implementation by Member States within the framework of their National Reform Programmes and to examine in this context progress on transposition and post implementation reviews;

5. Calls on the Commission to draw the attention of Member States which are found in the evaluation of their National Reform Programmes not to be making optimum use of EU funding to the specific areas in which there is still untapped potential;

6. Welcomes the fact that ‘tapping the potential of the Single Market’ is listed in the 2011 Annual Growth Survey as one of ten objectives needing to be implemented by 2012;

7. Calls on the Council and the Commission to link the European Semester still more systematically to current EU initiatives such as the Internal Market Scoreboard and the Single Market Act with implementation of its 12 'levers' established as a top priority, so as to take the completion of the Single Market fully into consideration and to secure the coherence of European economic policy;
8. Calls particularly on the Commission to include in the 2012 Annual Growth Survey the 12 priority measures of the Single Market Act which are due for adoption by the end of 2012;

9. Is of the opinion that the re-launch of the Single Market and in particular the implementation of the Single Market Act are an essential prerequisite for achieving sustainable growth in Europe by 2020; suggests that in order to guarantee European competitiveness on a global level, immediate improvements are needed in crucial areas such as the service sector, public procurement, research, innovation, education, energy and e-commerce amongst others;

10. Underlines the need to take into account the EU2020 strategy in the implementation of the European Semester; emphasises that the initiatives taken in the framework of the Single Market Act must be consistent with and contribute to achieving the objectives of the 7 flagships of the EU 2020 strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth;

11. Calls furthermore on the Council and the Commission to extend the scope of the European Semester to better rationalise and integrate EU consumer policy and use instruments such as the Consumer Scoreboard to measure the positive impact of EU legislation such as the consumer rights, consumer credit and unfair commercial practices directives,

12. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to increase support for SMEs which form the backbone of the Single Market economy in accordance with the findings of the Annual Growth Survey, in particular by the full implementation of the Small Business Act, and by means of a package of measures to eliminate the obstacles faced by SMEs when accessing funding;

13. Urges the Commission to take effective measures to improve access to finance for SMEs and innovative start-ups, as well as to ensure improvement of business environment in the EU, simplify procedures and reduce administrative burdens on companies in the Single Market;

14. Supports in this regard the review of the EU public procurement rules with a view to fostering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth within the Single Market by stimulating innovative cross-border procurement and ensuring regulatory simplification, greater transparency and legal clarity;

15. Calls on the European Council and the Commission, in order to consolidate the Digital Single Market, to extend the European Semester to reviewing progress on high capacity broadband roll out, including the implementation of market access obligations and enhanced consumer rights, including full contract and price information and number portability; calls furthermore on the Commission and Member States to report on the implementation of measures to cut data roaming charges in 2012 and action on 'cloud computing', the 'Internet of Things', e-signatures and cyber security;

16. Calls on the Member States to carry out further reforms in the services sector in line
with the Commission’s recommendations, in particular by removing unjustified restrictions on professional services, retailing and network industries, and to improve the business environment by reducing red tape and increasing transparency in the award of public procurement contracts.
RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

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<th>Date adopted</th>
<th>26.9.2011</th>
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<tr>
<td>Result of final vote</td>
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<td>Members present for the final vote</td>
<td>Pablo Arias Echeverría, Adam Bielan, Lara Comi, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, António Fernando Correia De Campos, Jürgen Creutzmann, Cornelis de Jong, Evelyne Gebhardt, Małgorzata Handzlik, Malcolm Harbour, Philippe Juvin, Sandra Kalniete, Edvard Kožušník, Toine Manders, Phil Prendergast, Mitro Repo, Heide Rühle, Christel Schaldemose, Andreas Schwab, Emilie Turunen, Bernadette Vergnaud, Barbara Weiler</td>
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<td>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</td>
<td>Pascal Canfin, Frank Engel, Marielle Gallo, Anna Hedh, Othmar Karas, Constance Le Grip, Antonyia Parvanova, Sylvana Rapti, Olle Schmidt, Kyriacos Triantaphyllides, Anja Weisgerber</td>
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