

Procedure file

Basic information	
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic) 1999/2017(COS)	Procedure completed
Trade, follow up to the Green paper COM(1996)0350. White Paper	
Subject 3.45.05 Business policy, e-commerce, after-sales service, commercial distribution 4.60 Consumers' protection in general	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy	PPE GAROSCI Riccardo	08/02/1999
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
Council of the European Union	REGI Regional Policy		23/02/1999
	ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	ELDR RYYNÄNEN Mirja	
		The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Key events			
27/01/1999	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1999)0006	Summary
12/02/1999	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
21/04/1999	Vote in committee		
21/04/1999	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0241/1999	
04/05/1999	Decision by Parliament	T4-0367/1999	Summary
04/05/1999	End of procedure in Parliament		
01/10/1999	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1999/2017(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142

Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ECON/4/10744

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		COM(1999)0006	27/01/1999	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0241/1999 OJ C 279 01.10.1999, p. 0008	21/04/1999	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0367/1999 OJ C 279 01.10.1999, p. 0023-0074	04/05/1999	EP	Summary
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		CES0706/1999 OJ C 258 10.09.1999, p. 0026	08/07/1999	ESC	

Trade, follow up to the Green paper COM(1996)0350. White Paper

PURPOSE : This White Paper presents the follow-up that the Commission intends to undertake with respect to the Green Paper on Commerce, which it adopted on 20/11/1996. The aim of the Green Paper was to provide food for thought and to launch a consultation procedure on the importance of this sector to the economy, on the challenges facing it and on possible ways of remaining competitive, thus maintaining its major contribution to employment and social cohesion. **CONTENT :** The aim of the White Paper is not to launch a major initiative nor to introduce radical changes of policy. The commerce and distribution sector needs a strategy essentially based on improving competitive conditions in the market in which competitiveness is the best response to consumer demand. The White Paper therefore sets out specific problems and practices calling for action at Community level in order to ensure the smooth running of the market and thereby guarantee that the sector can best contribute to consumer welfare. The Paper proposes a number of actions designed to create a coherent strategy for promoting the sector in the coming years; these actions fall into four priority groups : 1- improving the use of policy instruments to assist commerce (better understanding of the sector, changes in the structure of commerce : new challenges for policy); 2- improving the administrative, legislative and financial environment (simplification of administrative procedures, access to finance, improving the dialogue between commercial enterprises and their partners - social dialogue, consumers, credit institutions); 3- strengthening competitiveness and promoting entrepreneurship (electronic commerce, co-operation between businesses, training, commerce in rural and less-favoured urban areas, commerce and tourism, commerce and environment); 4- encouraging Europeanisation and internationalisation (the Euro, international trade, enlargement of the EU).?

Trade, follow up to the Green paper COM(1996)0350. White Paper

Without debate, the European Parliament adopted the resolution by Riccardo Garosci (PPE,IT) on the Commission White Paper on commerce. The report supports the general approach taken by the Commission in its overview of the sector set out in the White Paper. It stresses the important social role that small-scale and local commerce plays in rural and peripheral areas, its contribution to direct and indirect job creation and to economic and social cohesion, in both rural and urban areas. The Parliament considers that the necessary measures should be taken to prevent retailers from closing down and, to that end, to restore the balance between large-scale and traditional commerce. The report stresses in particular the role of direct selling both as a solution to the problems of retraining middle-aged people and as a new opportunity for young people and women, and calls on the Commission to carry out a special study in this area. The Commission is also called upon to promote electronic commerce, particularly in peripheral regions and to investigate how small businesses and shops could be supported in making the move to electronic shopping (eg. by training) and to spread the knowledge of good functional models. The Parliament calls on the Commission to consider the possibility of a proposal to regulate the growth of large-scale outlets and also calls for the more widespread use of electronic payment systems by commercial distribution organisations in order to restrict the amount of cash held by shops and supermarkets. To this end, it wishes to see a reduction in the fiscal burden on individual electronic payment transactions and a reduction in the application costs for payment cards. The report draws attention to the role that the commerce sector will play in the distribution of the euro with special programmes and financing for the change over of accounting systems and the setting-up of technical working groups involving traders, producers, industry and cash register and computer system suppliers. The Parliament considers that it should be made easier for SMEs in the commercial sector to participate in Structural Fund programmes. It also considers that the competitive position of small shops should be guaranteed by meeting their specific needs, for example, by reducing inheritance tax so as to facilitate the transfer of businesses.?