



Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2012/2044(INI)	Procedure completed
20 main concerns of European citizens and business with the functioning of the single market		
Subject		
1.20 Citizen's rights		
1.20.05 Public access to information and documents, administrative practice		
2 Internal market, single market		
2.80 Cooperation between administrations		
3.45.08 Business environment, reduction of the administrative burdens		
8.50.01 Implementation of EU law		
8.50.02 Legislative simplification, coordination, codification		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection		07/10/2011
		PPE BASTOS Regina	
		Shadow rapporteur	
		S&D REPO Mitro	
		ALDE ROCHEFORT Robert	
		Verts/ALE RÜHLE Heide	
		ECR MCCLARKIN Emma	
		EFD SALVINI Matteo	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs		27/09/2011
		S&D SCICLUNA Edward	
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs		05/10/2011
		ALDE HIRSCH Nadja	
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy		26/10/2011	
	PPE GYÜRK András		
TRAN Transport and Tourism		24/01/2012	
	S&D SIMPSON Brian		
CULT Culture and Education	The committee decided not to give an opinion.		
JURI Legal Affairs		01/03/2012	
	S&D REGNER Evelyn		
PETI Petitions		27/02/2012	
	PPE BUSUTTIL Simon		
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union	BARNIER Michel	

Key events			
22/08/2011	Non-legislative basic document published	SEC(2011)1003	Summary
15/03/2012	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
25/09/2012	Vote in committee		
11/10/2012	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0310/2012	Summary
25/10/2012	Results of vote in Parliament		
25/10/2012	Debate in Parliament		
25/10/2012	Decision by Parliament	T7-0395/2012	Summary
25/10/2012	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2012/2044(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	IMCO/7/07622

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		SEC(2011)1003	22/08/2011	EC	Summary
Committee draft report		PE483.745	29/02/2012	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE487.715	12/04/2012	EP	
Committee opinion	ITRE	PE480.801	26/04/2012	EP	
Committee opinion	EMPL	PE480.882	26/04/2012	EP	
Committee opinion	PETI	PE483.750	03/05/2012	EP	
Committee opinion	TRAN	PE480.854	10/05/2012	EP	
Committee opinion	ECON	PE483.705	01/06/2012	EP	
Committee opinion	JURI	PE486.197	01/06/2012	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0310/2012	11/10/2012	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0395/2012	25/10/2012	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2013)72/2	04/03/2013	EC	

20 main concerns of European citizens and business with the functioning of the single market

The European Commission has also compiled the 20 most frequently encountered problems faced by EU citizens and businesses when

travelling, moving or working abroad. The report, which was requested in the [Single Market Act](#), deals with issues such as professional qualifications, social security, tax barriers, access to finance and on-line shopping.

The key results in the latest Eurobarometer survey on the Single Market show that many Europeans are not aware of the Single Market and its benefits (35%). European citizens are, in general, satisfied with the possibilities that the Single Market offers in terms of a bigger choice of products (74%), more jobs (52%) and fair competition (47%).

On the other hand, the Single Market is perceived as only benefiting big companies (62%), worsening working conditions (51%) and not benefiting poor and disadvantaged people (53%). 28% of those interviewed are considering working abroad in the future.

Removing these obstacles and making the Single Market work better can help boost growth and increase trust in it. That is why the Commission is focussed on eliminating these problems. In many of the problem areas identified, work is already under way. For example, before the end of 2011, the Commission will set out proposals to modernise the system for recognising professional qualifications and to improve access to public procurement opportunities. Following proposals from the European Commission in April 2011, the costs for patents in Europe should be reduced by 80% in coming years.

The report offers a snapshot of real-life obstacles encountered in the single market. It is based on an analysis of complaints handled by the Commission and its assistance services (SOLVIT, Your Europe Advice, Enterprise Europe Network, European Consumer Centres, Europe Direct Contact Centre, EURES-European Employment Service), combined with the results of the recent Eurobarometer and focus group surveys.

The 20 main areas of concern have been identified without establishing any order of importance. For each concern, the Commission services have identified one or more possible root causes (whether the problem is one of information, implementation or legislation gaps) based on the practical experiences examined.

As a general matter, the 20 main concerns report confirms that there is still a divide between expectations and reality in the single market and that this divide stems from those inter-related gaps:

- an information gap: people often do not sufficiently know or understand their rights and do not know where to look for information or help;
- implementation gap: in many areas, a gap can be noted between the EU legal framework and the way it is implemented and applied in practice;
- legislative gap: in some areas, the EU legal framework itself does not match citizens' and businesses' expectations.

The 20 main concerns report will form the basis for discussion at the Single Market Forum on 2-4 October. This Forum is co-organised together with the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU and the European Parliament and will bring citizens, stakeholders and policy-makers at all levels of government together to discuss the state of the single market. This will be done in the framework of eight workshops and that will debate some of the concerns identified such as: recognition of professional qualifications, posting of workers and fundamental social rights, and improving the functioning of the EU public procurement legislation.

20 main concerns of European citizens and business with the functioning of the single market

The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection adopted the own-initiative report by Regina BASTOS (EPP, PT) on the 20 main concerns of European citizens and business with the functioning of the Single Market in response to the Commission working document entitled Single Market through the lens of the people: a snapshot of citizens and businesses 20 main concerns which followed [Parliaments resolution of 20 May 2010 on a single market at the service of consumers and citizens](#).

It notes that there are still too many obstacles preventing Europeans from taking full advantage of the existence of the single market, thus hindering the development of a sense of belonging to the same community, and that there is an urgent need to resolve these difficulties in order to allow Europeans to benefit fully from their right to freedom of movement and the advantages resulting from membership of the EU.

Members call on the Commission to present concrete actions and feasible proposals to resolve the issues identified as the 20 main concerns of the citizens, stating that, in this time of severe financial crisis, the EU needs to step up its efforts to eliminate barriers to the smooth functioning of the single market, in particular in sectors which can act as motors for sustainable growth, such as crossborder business and entrepreneurial activities, service provision, mobility, access to finance and financial literacy.

The report highlights several issues

Vehicle registration: Members note that Parliament receives numerous complaints from citizens faced with cumbersome formalities, very often relating to the re-registration of their vehicles in another Member State and the associated additional costs. They call for: (i) full implementation of the principles of EU law on the registration of cars in other Member States, (ii) a legislative proposal on the roadworthiness testing of motor vehicles, with a view to reducing the administrative burden for citizens and industry; (iii) the mutual recognition of technical controls between Member States; (iv) the establishment of a European database to centralise the technical data of all vehicles, in order to enable Europe-wide comparability and facilitate cross border vehicle registration; (v) minimising the financial cost to the public of registering vehicles in another Member State, by avoiding unnecessary costs through a common approach.

Professional qualifications: the committee recognises that increased mobility of qualified labour can contribute to making Europe more competitive and to this, feels it is necessary to adopt a modern framework for the recognition of professional qualifications, by making use of the Internal Market Information System (IMI) alert mechanism. It welcomes the introduction of a European Professional Card supported by the Internal Market Information System, and, highlighting the success of the automatic recognition procedure contained in Directive 2005/36/EC, calls for an assessment to be made of the possibility of extending it to more professions.

Bank accounts: Members note that European citizens have found banks imposing a range of impediments and complex and discriminatory demands when they want to open a bank account, with the result that 30 million European citizens have no bank account and mobility is thus impeded. They stress that all EU citizens who do not already hold a bank account in the Member State where they have lodged a request for one should have access to basic banking services, and they call on the Commission to make a legislative proposal to ensure consumer-friendly procedures for opening bank accounts across the Union.

Governance: the committee reaffirms the need to strengthen cooperation and interaction between Parliament, the Council, the Commission and Member States, so that citizens feel more included in the main projects and day-to-day activities of the EU and so that EU action, where deemed necessary, is targeted and useful. Furthermore, dialogue with civil society is essential to restore confidence in the single market. Members call on the Commission to:

- develop the Your Europe portal in order to turn it into a genuine digital one-stop shop providing citizens and businesses with information about the single market;
- make every effort to deliver a single, live online point of contact for citizens and consumers, via its offices in each Member State;
- analyse the involvement of local and regional authorities in the strategy for expanding the Single Market Information System;
- improve the SME test so as to ensure that it is applied consistently and coherently across all relevant policy areas and is incorporated into the overall assessment of proposals.

Information and communication: the report emphasises that there is a lack of information about the single market, which often means that citizens and enterprises do not know or do not understand their rights and obligations, and do not know how to obtain the required answers or assistance. It calls on the Commission to make use of all available technological resources in order to launch a dialogue with the citizens on the single market, by organising interactive information campaigns, prioritising the 20 main concerns, informing citizens and enterprises concerning the benefits of the Single Market, practical and concrete solutions to their day-to-day problems, and their rights, and encouraging them to participate in the creation of a competitive, fair and balanced market, while also paying special attention to strengthening the Points of Single Contact (PSCs). Members go on to make a series of recommendations on the provision of information on energy bills, the development of a single digital market, and right the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC).

- Legislation/Transposition: the report recognises that although the number of infringement proceedings initiated by the Commission has decreased, there were still about 2 100 such proceedings under way at the end of 2010. It notes the large number of petitions received by Parliaments Committee on Petitions relating to the problems citizens face within the internal market, particularly as regards the incorrect transposition or implementation of EU law. Member States are asked to prioritise the correct and timely transposition of legislation relating to the Single Market and to reduce levels of non-compliance. Members invite them to implement a Single Market test within the framework of their national legislation. Members make a series of recommendations on implementation and particularly call on the Commission to apply zero tolerance to any discriminatory rules and practices by Member States in the field of employment which run counter to EU law, and to initiate appropriate proceedings without delay in the event of non-compliance.

Lastly, Members make a series of recommendations to the Commission to:

- monitor the 20 main concerns of citizens and businesses in relation to the Single Market after two years, and to update them, drawing up a table for each of the concerns highlighted, indicating which actors are responsible for solutions to each of the root causes identified;
- focus information campaigns during the European Year of Citizens 2013 on the areas of those concerns that relate to rights based on EU citizenship, since these, on the basis of the selection methodology of the report, truly reflect what matters most to EU citizens in their everyday lives in the internal market;
- find ways of amalgamating the EU Citizenship Report with the report entitled The Single Market through the lens of the people in future, so as to avoid duplication and confusion and guard against the risk of decoupling problems from solutions;
- ensure that existing tools such as SOLVIT, the Internal Market Scoreboard, Internal Market Information System, Your Europe Advice and Your Europe are effectively interconnected so as to make it possible to monitor the proper and timely transposition of EU directives.

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It notes that there are still too many obstacles preventing Europeans from taking full advantage of the existence of the single market, thus hindering the development of a sense of belonging to the same community, and that there is an urgent need to resolve these difficulties in order to allow Europeans to benefit fully from their right to freedom of movement and the advantages resulting from membership of the EU.

Members call on the Commission to present concrete actions and feasible proposals to resolve the issues identified as the 20 main concerns of the citizens, in particular in sectors which can act as motors for sustainable growth, such as cross-border business and entrepreneurial activities, service provision, mobility, access to finance and financial literacy.

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- ensure that existing tools such as SOLVIT, the Internal Market Scoreboard, Internal Market Information System, Your Europe Advice and Your Europe are effectively interconnected so as to make it possible to monitor the proper and timely transposition of EU directives;
- evaluate the possibility of a European exchange programme for officials and other employees of regional and local authorities;
- facilitate access to microfinance facilities for the setting-up and development of small businesses, particularly those that intend to pursue cross-border operations.

Lastly, Member States are asked to take whatever action is necessary to simplify the complex national administrative procedures and ensure that workers, employers and other parties involved in a cross-border employment situation have access to all required information on rights and obligations related to their employment, such as social security, including unemployment protection, health care and taxation rules. This information needs to be available, as far as possible in electronic form, before, during and after the mobility experience.