

Internal market scoreboard

2008/2056(INI) - 23/09/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 612 votes to 33, with 8 abstentions, a resolution on the Internal Market Scoreboard.

The own initiative report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Charlotte CEDERSCHIÖLD (EPP-ED, SE) on behalf of the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection.

Implementation of directives: the resolution stresses that timely implementation, correct transposition and correct application of Internal Market directives is a prerequisite for the effective functioning of the internal market, and has implications also for competitiveness and the economic and social balance within the EU. MEPs underline the importance of ownership of the Internal Market at national, regional and local levels and the Commission's role to create partnerships in the related policy-making process to this end.

Recalling that, from 2009, the transposition deficit target is set at 1%, the resolution urges those Member States with a particularly high deficit to take immediate action and the Commission to work closely with them with a view to improving the situation. Furthermore, MEPs regret that Member States sometimes add additional requirements when transposing directives into national law, which hampers the effective functioning of the Internal Market.

MEPs stress that a strong, open and competitive Internal Market acts as an essential part of Europe's response to the challenges of globalisation, and believe that the external dimension should be taken into consideration by the Commission when taking new Internal Market initiatives. Parliament recalls that in an open and competitive Internal Market, better targeted and more stringent tools are needed to improve the fight against counterfeiting and piracy. The Commission is also called upon to speed up the process of solving disputes at an early stage and to highlight those infringements with the most serious consequences for European citizens.

A tool for policy-making: MEPs consider that the Scoreboard could be further developed as a tool assisting policy makers in identifying obstacles and barriers and in pinpointing where new initiatives are called for. They call on the Commission to widen and deepen the range of information and indicators included in the Scoreboard, inter alia quality, social conditions of workers and the impact on the environment and climate change.

The Commission is also called upon to:

- include an easily comprehensible summary in future Scoreboards to increase accessibility for citizens and other stakeholders;
- consider indicators that better reflect the relative importance of directives for industry and citizens within various sectors;
- introduce indicators in the Scoreboard regarding the number of proceedings before the European Court of Justice concerning quality of secondary legislation, as well as its incorrect implementation;
- include indicators relating to cross-border aspects of public procurement;
- evaluate, through sector inquiries and surveys, the quality and coherence of implementation in the Member States in order to guarantee the effective functioning of legislation;
- develop indicators measuring the costs incurred by citizens and industry as a result of late and incorrect transposition;
- hold, in cooperation with Parliament and the Presidency of the Council, a yearly Internal Market Forum with participation of the Member States and other stakeholders.

Free movement of persons: the resolution regrets that citizens still face many obstacles in relation to free movement within the Internal Market (15% of SOLVIT cases handled in 2007 were related to free movement of persons and EU citizenship). MEPs therefore call on the Member States and the Commission to step up efforts to ensure the free movement of persons. In particular, they call on Member States to establish one-stop shops to assist people on all legal and practical matters when moving within the Internal Market.

The Member States are called upon to establish national Internal Market centres to promote the coordination, simplification and political visibility of their efforts to make the Internal Market work. Member States are also urged to ensure improved practical knowledge of EU law at all levels of national administrations. The report also calls on the Member States to ensure that SOLVIT centres are properly staffed in order to improve administrative efficiency in and shorten the handling time noticeably.

Consumer Markets: lastly, MEPs consider that the Internal Market Scoreboard and the Consumer Markets Scoreboard are interlinked and that it is important to promote their coherent development. However, they underline that they have different target addressees and hence should be kept separate with different sets of indicators.