

2014/0012(NTT) - Single Market Act

Since its establishment in 1992, the Single Market has created new opportunities and brought a number of benefits for consumers and businesses. But free movement of goods, services, capital and people does not always happen smoothly. Pieces of legislation are still missing and greater integration is still necessary in some fields.

In order to exploit the full potential of the Single Market, the European Commission presented in April 2011 the Single Market Act i.e. a series of measures to boost the European economy and create jobs. The Single Market Act included proposals in the following twelve priority fields:

1. Access to finance for SMEs (e.g. by facilitating venture capital funds)
2. Mobility for citizens (e.g. by the recognition of professional qualifications)
3. Intellectual property rights (e.g. by a unitary patent protection and litigation system)
4. Consumer empowerment (e.g. by facilitating the resolution of conflicts out of court)
5. Services (e.g. by revising the European standardisation system)
6. Networks (e.g. by a high performance infrastructure and the Connecting Europe Facility)
7. Digital single market (e.g. by the recognition of electronic signature, identification and authentication)
8. Social entrepreneurship (e.g. by facilitating the development of social investment funds)
9. Taxation (e.g. by creating a consistent framework for the taxation of the energy industry)
10. Social cohesion (e.g. by rules for workers posted to another Member State)
11. Business environment (e.g. by simplifying accounting standards)
12. Public Procurement (e.g. by a revision of public procurement rules).

Despite the initial objective to conclude the legislative procedures by the end of 2012, i.e. the 20th anniversary of the Single Market, agreement has proved difficult to reach on certain aspects of the Single Market Act. In the meanwhile, in October 2012, the Commission proposed a second set of 12 key actions (Single Market Act II) to further develop the Single Market in the following areas:

Developing fully integrated networks

1. Rail transport (improve quality of service and prices for rail passengers)
2. Maritime transport (simplify the shipping of goods by creating a single market for sea transport)
3. Air transport (enhance the safety, efficiency and environmental performance of air travel)
4. Energy (provide better service to consumers at affordable prices, promote renewable energy and energy efficiency and guarantee security of supply)

Fostering mobility of citizens and businesses across borders

5. Individual mobility (help people to look for jobs in other EU countries via an EU-wide electronic recruitment, placement and job matching tool)
6. Access to finance (create new investment vehicles to make it easier to invest in long-term projects in the real economy)
7. Business environment (modernise insolvency rules)

Supporting the digital economy across Europe

8. Services (encourage online services by making electronic payments more efficient)
9. Digital single market (facilitate access to high-speed communication infrastructures)
10. Electronic invoicing (making it compulsory for purchases of goods and services by public authorities)

Strengthening social entrepreneurship, cohesion and consumer confidence/non-discrimination

11. Consumers (improve safety of products)
12. Social cohesion (ensure access to a basic bank account for all EU citizens and ensure transparent banking fees)

After a large number of trilogues and technical meetings concerning the proposals put forward by the Commission in the framework of the Single Market Act I, Parliament succeeded in having many of its key positions incorporated in the adopted texts. As regards the Commission proposals within the framework of the Single Market Act II, Parliament has defined its position in most cases before the parliamentary recess for the elections 2014 and two legislative procedures (on electronic invoicing and on measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred on workers in the context of freedom of movement for workers) have been fully closed.

Parliament also defined its position on the proposal for a Common European Sales Law which could facilitate cross-border transactions and thus benefit consumers and businesses, and is now waiting for the Council to adopt its position.

Payment services in the internal market	***I 2013/0264(COD)
European long-term investment funds	***I 2013/0214(COD)
Electronic invoicing in public procurement	***I 2013/0213(COD)
Implementation of the Single European Sky. Recast	***I 2013/0186(COD)

Payment accounts: comparability of fees, account switching and access to accounts with basic features	***I	2013/0139(COD)
Free movement of workers: measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred on workers	***I	2013/0124(COD)
Consumer product safety	***I	2013/0049(COD)
Market surveillance of products	***I	2013/0048(COD)
Opening of the market for domestic passenger transport services by rail: award of public service contracts. 4th Railway Package	***II	2013/0028(COD)
Railway safety. Recast. 4th Railway Package	***II	2013/0016(COD)
Interoperability of the rail system within the EU. Recast. 4th Railway Package	***II	2013/0015(COD)
European Union Agency for Railways. 4th Railway Package	***II	2013/0014(COD)
Procurement in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors	***I	2011/0439(COD)
Public procurement	***I	2011/0438(COD)
Recognition of professional qualifications: European Professional Card supported by the Internal Market Information System (IMI)	***I	2011/0435(COD)
European venture capital funds	***I	2011/0417(COD)
Online dispute resolution for consumer disputes (Regulation on consumer ODR)	***I	2011/0374(COD)
Alternative dispute resolution for consumer disputes (Directive on consumer ADR)	***I	2011/0373(COD)
Trans-European energy infrastructure: guidelines	***I	2011/0300(COD)
Trans-European transport network: development	***I	2011/0294(COD)
Common European Sales Law	***I	2011/0284(COD)
Roaming on public mobile communications networks within the Union. Recast	***I	2011/0187(COD)
European standardisation	***I	2011/0150(COD)
Enhanced cooperation in the area of the creation of unitary patent protection: implementation	***I	2011/0093(COD)