



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 25 April 2013

8952/13

**PE 196
MI 337
CONSOM 75
SAN 146
COMPET 246
ENT 113
IND 122
ECO 72
FIN 219**

NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: Delegations

Subject: Partial summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament's **Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO)**, held in Brussels on 4 March 2013
Items 10 and 11 on the agenda

Item 10 on the agenda

Exchange of views in the framework of structured dialogue with Mr. Tonio Borg, Commissioner responsible for Health and Consumer Policy

Mr BORG gave an overview of the state of play on the implementation of the four pillars of the Consumer Agenda.

Regarding consumer safety, he stressed the need to make product traceability easier, and said that the mandatory indication of the country of origin would improve the knowledge of the supply chain. Mr BORG hoped that this would facilitate enforcement and strengthen consumer confidence in product safety.

Regarding consumer information, he indicated that a website providing the consumers with information on their rights had been launched, and that the Commission, which had initiated a dialogue with stakeholders on comparison tools and misleading environmental claims ("greenwashing"), was now assessing how to take matters further.

Regarding enforcement, Mr BORG felt that increased coordination at EU level was needed, in particular on digital trade, and said that he expected a review of the Consumer Protection Regulation by end of 2014, following a public consultation to be launched before the summer. Mr BORG felt that the agreements reached on alternative dispute resolution and on-line dispute resolution were a milestone, and thanked the IMCO rapporteurs and Chairman for their work on these files. He also said that a EU framework on collective redress was needed, and that the Commission would finalise an initiative this year.

Regarding the integration of consumer interests in other policies, Mr BORG said that he would ensure that the announced initiatives, e.g. on bank accounts, would be finalised. He also mentioned that a report on the implementation of the Consumer Credit Directive would be published later this year and that the Commission would launch a consultation on pensions and conduct a study on over-indebtedness.

Mr BORG concluded by saying that he counted on IMCO's support concerning the MFF.

Ms GEBHARDT (S&D, DE) stressed the need for quick action on access to bank accounts and felt that a Charter of consumers' rights could help raise awareness on the rights derived from EU law. Mr SCHWAB (EPP, DE) welcomed the emphasis put on enforcement, and asked Mr BORG what could be done to improve it. Mr BUŞOI (ALDE, RO) welcomed the fact that the Commission had taken on board many of the EP amendments relating to the proposal on the prices of medicinal products, and inquired into the steps that the Commission would take to find an agreement with the Council. Mr TARABELLA (S&D, BE) urged the Commission to table a proposal on collective redress. Ms HANDZLIK (EPP, PL) asked Mr BORG whether the Commission had taken into account the effects that the Tobacco Directive Proposal will have on Member States, and asked if e-cigarettes will be banned.

Mr ROCHEFORT (ALDE, FR) stressed that the EP and the Commission should work together on the MFF, and felt that new consuming practices should not curtail consumer protection. Ms CORAZZA BILDT (ALDE, SE) welcomed the Commission's effective reaction to the horsemeat scandal, and asked Mr BORG what he intended to do on food labelling and penalties.

Mr BORG indicated that the proposal on access to bank accounts would be tabled in May, and welcomed Ms GEBHARDT's proposal for a Charter of consumers' rights. He said that there was strong opposition in the Council concerning the proposal on the prices of medicinal products. Mr BORG indicated that the Commission would present this year an initiative on collective redress, but pointed out that the initiative's form was currently discussed in the Commission, which may need to proceed by small steps. On the Tobacco Directive Proposal, he felt that economic concerns, as well as specific national issues (e.g. slim cigarettes, regional products) would complicate the discussion in Council.

Concerning the horsemeat scandal, he pointed out that many Member States had carried out tests that went beyond the Commission's recommendations., and felt that the traceability legislation was adequate. Mr BORG indicated that the Commission would act on the basis of an impact assessment, which should be ready by end of summer, but pointed out that Member States held different views. He also announced that the Commission would propose a package, and that the penalties incurred should reflect the economic gain made

Item 11 on the agenda

Exchange of views in the framework of structured dialogue with Mr. Mr. Antonio Tajani, Commissioner responsible for Industry and Entrepreneurship

Mr TAJANI recalled the Commission package proposal on product safety and market surveillance, stressing that a high number of products were unsafe and that the Commission had acted against counterfeiting. He pointed out that the scope of the Commission proposal on market surveillance was wide, and that its aims was to simplify the law and to improve the coordination between the existing authorities. Mr TAJANI indicated that the Commission proposal was accompanied by an action plan aiming to make the market of consumer goods safer.

Mr TAJANI said that the Commission wanted to simplify the legislation on internal market for industrial products, and envisaged adopting a proposal after the summer recess. He felt that priority sectors ought to be identified in the annual European standardisation work programme, and expressed his satisfaction with the results achieved on single mobile phone chargers. Mr TAJANI further indicated that the Commission would act to make eCall services compulsory.

Mr SCHWAB (EPP, DE) urged the Commission to clarify whether the Late payment Directive implied that changes be made to German law, and hoped that missing construction products standards would quickly be adopted. Ms GEBHARDT (S&D, DE) welcomed the work made on the interoperability of radio equipment, and thanked Mr TAJANI for putting the issue of industrial policy on the table. Ms RÜHLE (Greens/EFA, DE) asked Mr TAJANI to clarify the state of play on the adoption of delegated acts based on the Construction Directive. Ms CORAZZA BILDT (ALDE, SE) wondered what actions could be taken to ensure that the indication of origin did not hinder trade, whilst Ms WEILER (S&D, DE) regretted that some Member States seemed to willingly hinder the transposition of the Late payment Directive. Ms LE GRIP (EPP, FR) asked Mr TAJANI if he believed that EU competition rules allowed for the emergence of EU industrial champions.

Mr TAJANI stressed that Member States were free to request shorter payment deadlines than provided for in the Late payment Directive, and said that the Commission services would contact the German authorities to avoid any misunderstanding in this respect. He expected the delegated acts on construction products to enter into force this autumn. Regarding traceability, Mr TAJANI recalled that the Commission had made a proposal addressing the WTO's concerns, and stressed that equal treatment between EU products and imported products should be ensured. Lastly, he felt that, in the framework of the review of the rules on State aids, it would be appropriate to reflect on the fact that competition now takes place on a global level.