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NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: Delegations

Subject: Summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament **Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO)**, Brussels, 5 February 2015

- **IMCO discussed for the first time its draft opinion on recommendations for the TTIP. In general, members welcomed the draft opinion but intended to table amendments in relation to some specific issues of concern. There was no common line on the issue and members expressed some concern.**
- **The Commission presented its "Interoperability solutions for European public administrations, businesses and citizens (ISA2)" proposal.**
- **The committee also discussed the report on cableway installations and the draft opinion on the economic governance framework .**

The meeting was chaired by Ms FORD (ECR, UK).

1. Update on trilogue negotiations

Ms COLLIN-LANGEN (EPP, DE) reported on the recent constructive trilogue on the package travel and assisted travel arrangements dossier (4 February), stressing that a) the scope and b) the definitions were the key issues. In this respect, she was afraid that the Council approach would not allow account to be taken of the latest technological developments; the Commission has been tasked to verify this. The rapporteur was also unsure whether May would be a realistic target.

2. Recommendations to the European Commission on the negotiations for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)

- Rapporteur for the opinion: Dita CHARANZOVÁ (ALDE, CZ)
- Responsible: INTA - Bernd LANGE (S&D, DE)
- Consideration of draft opinion
- Deadline for tabling amendments: 25 February 2015

The rapporteur expressed her unhappiness about the timetable imposed by the leading committee (INTA) and suggested continuing the discussions on the TTIP even once IMCO had adopted an opinion; this proposal was supported by several speakers.

Despite many concerns and issues raised by members, the TTIP was not ruled out, though the S&D coordinator, Ms GEBHARDT (DE), made it clear that if certain conditions were not met, the EP should withhold its consent. The Greens/EFA coordinator, Mr DURAND (FR), did not see any advantages for the consumer in the TTIP. Conversely, the ECR speakers argued that the TTIP was an opportunity for high-quality standards and lower consumer products prices, an argument rejected by some S&D speakers, who took the view that the quality of products should be the primary concern.

In general, the draft opinion was welcomed by the political groups (GUE/NGL did not participate in the debate) and regarded as a good basis for discussion. Many speakers pointed out that IMCO was one of the committees most concerned by the TTIP and its implications. There were a number of key issues:

- Regulatory cooperation was considered desirable by many speakers from different groups. The EPP coordinator, Mr SCHWAB (DE), argued that if cooperation proved impossible, each group should be allowed to proceed alone. The S&D coordinator, supported by many other speakers, took the view that the EU should clearly spell out its position and ensure that, even if common standards were desirable in principle, European consumer/environmental/social standards should a) be protected and b) remain within EU competence.
- Access to market/public procurement was also considered an essential element and it was repeatedly mentioned that the US had to make significant progress and guarantee fair access to their market.
- Many speakers called for all duty/tariff and non-tariff barriers to be abolished insofar as possible in order to facilitate trade and allow companies to make savings.
- Though the rapporteur took the view that the investor-to-state dispute settlement (ISDS) issue fell within the exclusive competence of the leading INTA committee, many speakers were of the opposite view. The S&D was divided on the issue: its coordinator said the EU should have a clear position on this matter, whilst Mr TARABELLA (BE) argued that there should be no such possibility if consumer rights were not protected in full and Ms GRAPINI (RO) was even opposed in principle.
- The call for a specific SMEs chapter from Ms PAUNOVA (EPP, BG) was supported by speakers of the S&D and ECR groups.

The Commission reassured members that it was out of the question to lower EU standards or even relinquish the EU's regulatory autonomy. On the contrary, the aim was to make life easier for companies, particularly SMEs. Regarding the issue of public procurement, the Commission said that the objective was to establish an equal footing between EU and US competitors. Concerning the ISDS, the Commission took note of the positions expressed and invited members to consult the Commission's report on the issue, adding that it hoped to reach an agreement within the EU on this issue by May.

3. Interoperability solutions for European public administrations, businesses and citizens (ISA2) Interoperability as a means for modernising the public sector

- Rapporteur for the opinion: Liisa JAAKONSAARI (S&D, FI)
- Responsible: ITRE - Carlos ZORRINHO (S&D)
- Presentation of the proposal by the Commission

The Commission gave a presentation¹ outlining different aspects of the ISA2 (definition of interoperability, scope, focused activities, monitoring /evaluation, implementation/budget, political context and challenges). The rapporteur said that ISA2 had significant potential and that the IMCO committee was ideally suited to act as the central coordination point, particularly in light of the scattered competences within the Commission. The EPP, ECR and ALDE shadow rapporteurs (Ms PAUNOVA, the Chair and Mr GUOGA (LT) respectively) welcomed the proposal, though Ms PAUNOVA took the view that there was a lack of focus on SMEs and the Chair regretted the absence of a full impact assessment. Ms KALLAS (ALDE, EE) added that citizens needed to trust the system. The Commission replied that it had set up an internal coordination group and pointed out that it had also carried out an *ex ante* evaluation. Regarding security, this was ultimately a matter for Member States but the Commission would issue guidelines.

The rapporteur announced that she would present the draft opinion by 3 March.

4. Cableway installations

- Rapporteur: Antonio LÓPEZ-ISTÚRIZ WHITE (EPP, ES)
- Responsible: IMCO
- Consideration of amendments

The committee held a brief exchange of views on the amendments. The rapporteur, supported by the ALDE shadow rapporteur (Ms CHARANZOVÁ), was of the opinion that technical neutrality should be ensured. He also advocated the exclusion of historical cableway installations, as requested in particular by the ECR group.

¹http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/imco/dv/ppt_interoperability_/ppt_interoperability_en.pdf

The committee will vote on the report on 17 March.

5. The review of the economic governance framework: stocktaking and challenges

- Rapporteur for the opinion: Ildikó GÁLL-PELCZ (EPP, HU)
- Responsible: ECON - Pervenche BERÈS (S&D, FR)
- Consideration of draft opinion
- Deadline for tabling amendments: 11 February

The rapporteur took the view that genuine growth could be possible if the single market was fully implemented with an appropriate surveillance framework. Therefore, she believed that the Commission should provide a progress report every year. She also asked the committee not to repeat what it had already said in its "Single Market governance within the European Semester 2015" report. The S&D, ECR and ALDE shadow rapporteurs welcomed the draft opinion but also announced their intention to table amendments on some specific issues: the S&D shadow rapporteur (Mr DANTI, IT) wished to mention the strengthening of the single market in connection with the Commission investment plan. The Chair recalled the differences between economic governance and the single market and wished to focus more on single market implementation. The ALDE shadow rapporteur, Ms TØRNÆS (DK), put special emphasis on SMEs and shared the view of the ECR shadow rapporteur that national ownership of economic governance should be increased. The Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur (Mr DURAND) expressed concerns about the increasing tendency towards a technical and accounting approach, leaving aside mid-term and long-term objectives. The rapporteur agreed with most of what was said.

VOTES:

6. Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT): State of Play and Outlook

- Rapporteur for the opinion: Othmar KARAS (EPP, AT)
- Responsible: JURI - Sylvia-Yvonne KAUFMANN (S&D, DE)
- Adoption of draft opinion

Vote postponed to the next meeting.

7. **Mutual assistance between the administrative authorities of the Member States and cooperation between the latter and the Commission to ensure the correct application of the law on customs and agricultural matters**

- Rapporteur: Liisa JAAKONSAARI (S&D, FI)
- Adoption of outcome of trilogues

Vote postponed to the next meeting.

8. **Next meeting**

- 23 February 2015, 15.00 - 18.30 (Brussels)
- 24 February 2015, 9.00 - 12.30 and 15.00 - 18.30 (Brussels)
