



Newsletter

Issue 36- November 2012

AT A GLANCE

This issue addresses the items on the agenda of the **next committee meetings** on 28-29 November and 17-18 December. Amongst others, on 28 November IMCO will proceed with a first discussion of the amendments tabled to Ms Le Grip's draft Report on Union Customs Code (recast) and the day after the Committee will have a second exchange of views on the amendments to Mrs Vergnaud's draft Report on recognition of professional qualifications. On 17 December, IMCO Members will consider the draft Report on a new Agenda for European Consumer Policy and on 18 December they will vote on the report on the award of concession contracts.

The full Agenda of the next two meetings are available on [IMCO's webpage](#).

This edition also reports, from the **last committee meetings** of 24-25 September, 10-11 October, 5-6 November and 13 November as well as on July's **IMCO Delegation to Washington and its follow up** in October. Amongst others, on 25 September, IMCO voted on the Report on the 20 main concerns of European citizens and business with the functioning of the Single Market. IMCO also endorsed its Coordinators' decision to enter into negotiations with the Council in view of reaching an early second reading agreement on Customs enforcement of IPR. On 11 October, the Committee adopted the Report on Completing the Digital Single Market and 6 November it discussed the draft Report on the governance of the Single Market. On 13 November, IMCO and ENVI conducted a three hour hearing of Commissioner-designate Dr Tonio Borg.

SELECTED NEWS

Single market turns 20: 'Generation 1992' winners rewarded



On **15 October** the EU awarded 20 prizes to an equal number of young people, all born in 1992 (the year in which the EU's internal market was launched), for their commitment and creativity. A total of 380 young people from 27 EU Member States took part in the 'Generation 92' competition, which was open between 11 April and 9 September. Michel Barnier, the commissioner responsible for the internal market, and MEP Toine Manders handed over at the European Parliament the first prizes. In the '*article*' category, the prize winner is a young French citizen named Berina Mulovic, who impressed the jury with her piece of writing entitled: '27 countries, 23 languages, hundreds of projects, millions of citizens, billions of exchanges and two words: European Union'. In it, she recounts her experience of exile from her city, Sarajevo, and her passion for the European project. Young Greek Evangelos Pappas was awarded first prize in the '*smartphone app*' category for his 'European Union quiz'. Maria Gil Soriano of Spain won in the '*video*' category for an ingenious short video called 'My generation' done in a very 'Facebook style' on the mobility of young people studying and improving their training within the EU. Sarah Freistedt of Germany won first prize in the '*photography*' category. Her photos carried the title 'Movement without borders'. Athanas Filipov of Bulgaria was the winner in the '*cartoon*' category with 'Keep it together' – a plate-tectonics-inspired view of the EU, each plate of a different colour and linked to its neighbour by an EU star-shaped bridge.

Links: [Winners 'Generation 1992'](#)

Online gambling: reducing the risk



On **23 October** the European Commission adopted an action plan for online gambling in order to protect consumers, crack down on irresponsible advertising and tackle betting-related match-fixing. Online gambling is growing. Games such as poker – along with casinos, sports-betting and lotteries – are big business: 6.8 million Europeans placed an online bet in 2011, generating revenues of €9.3 billion for online gambling companies. That figure is expected to grow to €13 billion by 2015. Many EU countries have introduced rules to keep gamblers safe, but due to its cross-border nature, individual Member States cannot effectively tackle the problem from all angles and shield consumers from fraud, and protect vulnerable groups such as children. Action plan initiatives will be introduced from 2013.

Links: [EC Report](#)

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NEXT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

(28-29 NOVEMBER 2012 AND 17-18 DECEMBER 2012)

[Watch the committee meeting live](#)

[Agenda and meeting documents](#)

Union Customs Code (Recast)

On **28 November** Members will proceed with a first discussion of the amendments tabled to Ms Le Grip's draft Report on Union Customs Code (recast). They mainly focus on the core issues of the Commission's proposal and concern the valorisation of the Authorised Economic Operator status and the modification of the temporary storage from a "special customs procedure" to a "status". Most of these amendments were tabled in agreement with the majority of the political groups as they touch provisions unchanged in the Commission's proposal (text in white). In line with the Interinstitutional Agreement on recasting techniques for legal acts, at its meeting of 28 November IMCO will officially notify to the Commission and Council these amendments on the "white text". The vote in IMCO is foreseen on 18 December. The Committee will then need to endorse the Coordinators' decision on whether to start negotiations with the Council in view of a first reading agreement.

RAPPORTEUR: [Constance Le Grip \(EPP\)](#) [Procedure file](#)

Amendment of Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications and of Regulation on administrative cooperation through the Internal Market Information System

On **29 November** Members will proceed with a second exchange of views on the amendments to Mrs Vergnaud's draft Report. The amendments focus on the core issues of the Commission's proposal, as well as on specific points touched upon by the Rapporteur. In particular, amendments concern the coverage or not of notaries, the provisions concerning the professional card, notably the foreseen deadlines, the deletion or limitation of the right of partial access, the minimum training requirements for health professionals (especially nurses) and architects, and finally on the extension of the alert mechanism and the control of linguistic qualifications for health professionals. The vote in IMCO is foreseen on 24 January 2013.

RAPPORTEUR: [Bernadette Vergnaud \(S&D\)](#) [Procedure file](#)

EVENTS

20 years of the Single Market commemoration of 15 October

On **15 October 2012**, more than 400 European citizens took part in the Launch Event of the Single Market Week, organised to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Single Market. The event was opened by IMCO Chair Malcolm Harbour and Commission President José Manuel Barroso, with a special letter sent by Jacques Delors and the presence of Mario Monti via video-link. Members, panellists representing consumer and business associations, as well as audience discussed the achievement and challenges of the Single Market and applauded the award of 5 prizes in a special Generation 1992 competition. Specific issues included: A Single Market for citizens, better awareness on rights, building trust, countering retrenchment tendencies in Member States, better enforcement and mapping the future.

LINKS: [20 years of the Single Market](#); [Short video of the Event](#); [Occasional video on the 20th Anniversary of the Single Market](#)

A new agenda for European Consumer Policy

On **17 December**, IMCO will consider the draft Report on a new Agenda for European Consumer Policy. The draft report will cover a number of current as well as future concerns which need to be addressed by the consumer agenda. When preparing measures part of consumer policy one needs to consider: European sovereignty, E-commerce, a Roadmap of resources. The financial programme Horizon 2020 needs also to be taken into account as well as health, safety, education, means of redress (including collective redress) and sustainability of development. The implications of the current financial crisis are significant regarding both the economic as well as the social context as this affects consumers' confidence. The current climate has yielded precarious labour conditions, job losses, a reduction of public savings and an increase in inequality. The consumers' current marginalisation will be assessed as well as what role should be played by the Consumer Associations to protect in a more punctual way consumers. The situation of European consumers needs to be viewed also as part of the wider global context where services and goods go beyond the EU frontiers. The costs of the Consumer Agenda will be evaluated and which implementing measures need to be put in place will be discerned.

RAPPORTEUR: [Vicente M. Garcés Ramón \(S&D\)](#) [Procedure file](#)

Award of concession contracts

On **18 December** IMCO Members will vote on the Report on the award of concession contracts (Rapporteur: P. Juvin). This forms part of the wider reform package of EU public procurement rules currently under discussion in IMCO. Among the 765 amendments tabled, 4 proposed to reject the Commission proposal since some Members are questioning the necessity of legislating on concessions. Despite these differences, Rapporteur and Shadow Rapporteurs are now discussing with a view to reaching compromise amendments before the vote, focusing on key issues such as the definition and calculation of a concession, exclusions (sector-specific or general exclusions, including conditions for public-public cooperations and affiliated undertakings), as well as social and environmental considerations. In addition, more technical issues are being tackled such as thresholds, duration and modification of a concession, as well as the simplification of procedural aspects.

RAPPORTEUR: [Philippe Juvin \(EPP\)](#) [Procedure File](#)

Conference on Financial Stability, the Single Market and Growth

On **19 November 2012** the European Commission is hosting a one-day conference on the progress underway to ensure the safety and stability of the EU financial sector, to reinforce the Single Market, and to help promote economic growth. Michel Barnier, EU Commissioner for Internal Market and Services, will open the event, followed by speakers and panellists including: Benoît Coeuré, ECB Executive Board Member; Malcolm Harbour, MEP, Chair of the IMCO Committee; John Vickers, Oxford University- former Chair of UK Independent Commission on Banking; Erkki Liikanen, Chair of the EU High-level Group on Structural Banking Reform; Thomas Hoenig, Director, US Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

LINK: [Conference programme](#)

LAST COMMITTEE MEETINGS

(24-25 SEPTEMBER, 10-11 OCTOBER, 5-6 NOVEMBER AND 13 NOVEMBER 2012)

20 main concerns of European citizens and business with the functioning of the Single Market

Completing the Digital Single Market



On **25 September**, IMCO voted on the Report on the 20 main concerns of European citizens and business with the functioning of the Single Market, prepared by Regina Bastos. Following a short discussion on the compromise amendments proposed by the Rapporteur and broadly agreed upon by Shadows, the Committee adopted the own-initiative report on European citizens' and business' 20 main concerns with the functioning of the Single Market by unanimity. Amongst other things, she stressed the need to complete and improve the functioning of the Single Market in order to deliver growth and the need to ensure effective implementation of the rules, to make the Commission procedures with regard to the implementation of the internal market acquis by the Member States more transparent, and to speed up the procedures before the Court of Justice as these were in her view among the key priorities.

RAPPORTEUR: [Regina Bastos \(EPP\)](#) [Procedure file](#)

Customs Enforcement of intellectual property rights

On **25 September**, the full Committee endorsed (by 25 in favour, 1 abstention and 3 against) the IMCO Coordinators' decision to enter into negotiations with the Council in view of reaching a so-called "negotiated common position" in an early second reading on the dossier. This decision follows Parliament's first reading position adopted in plenary on 3 July on the proposal for a Regulation on customs enforcement of intellectual property rights.

The EP negotiating team will consist of: Malcolm Harbour, Chair of IMCO Committee; Jürgen Creutzmann, rapporteur on the dossier; Marielle Gallo, (EPP shadow and rapporteur for opinion in JURI); Anna Hedh, (S&D shadow); Christian ENGSTRÖM (Green shadow); Emma McClarkin (ECR shadow); Cornelis De Jong (GUE/NGL shadow); Matteo Salvini (EFD shadow); and Josefa Andrés Barea, rapporteur for opinion in INTA.

Pursuant to Annex XX of the EP Rules of Procedure on the code of conduct for negotiating in the context of the ordinary legislative procedures, the amendments adopted in plenary on 3 July will form the basis for the mandate of the EP negotiating team.

RAPPORTEUR: [Jürgen Creutzmann \(ALDE\)](#) [Procedure file](#)

On **11 October**, the Committee adopted the report on 'Completing the Digital Single Market' as proposed by the Rapporteur Pablo Arias Echeverría, PPE with 33 votes in favour and 2 against. A total of 141 Amendments, out of the 110 IMCO amendments and the 70 amendments submitted in the 3 opinions from CULT, ITRE and JURI, have been endorsed. This includes 8 Compromise amendments as well as 2 oral amendments.

The main themes of the report include amongst others: the welcoming of the new Single Market Act II, equal access to the Digital Single Market, data protection in the context of new technologies and safeguarding against counterfeiting, bridging the gap between the online and offline world, ensuring smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, ensuring legal certainty, the setting of an 'e-commerce/digital single market test for all future single market legislation to overcome market fragmentation, SME development programmes, effective means of redress, lower prices for cross-border delivery and shipping services, cutting of red-tape, simplifying the collective management of copyright and ensuring a safe internet for children.

RAPPORTEUR: [Pablo Arias Echeverría \(EPP\)](#) [Procedure file](#)

Better Governance for the Single Market

On **6 November** the Rapporteur presented his draft Report with recommendations to the Commission on the governance of the Single Market. Reiterating the need for European Parliament to adopt a legislative own-initiative report in this area, which is still subject to authorisation, he underlined that the main objectives of the initiative would be to contribute to improving the legislation, transposition, implementation and application as well as the enforcement of the internal market regulatory framework. He also called for an enhanced transparency and democratic accountability. Shadow Rapporteurs agreed on the need for a radical change in the Single Market governance and broadly supported the request for a legislative proposal to bring the Single Market into the European Semester cycle. The discussion that followed focussed on issues such as the choice between regulations and directives, pre-legislative consultations carried by the Commission, the role of Single Points of Contact in improving the functioning of the internal market and the communication of the internal market benefits to citizens and businesses. The deadline for amendments was set on 12 November 2012.

RAPPORTEUR: [Andreas Schwab \(EPP\)](#) [Procedure file](#)

IMCO hearing of Commissioner-designate Dr Tonio Borg

On **13 November**, a three hour hearing of Commissioner-designate Dr Tonio Borg was organised together by the IMCO and ENVI committees. The hearing was an opportunity for Members to assess Dr Borg's suitability and competence for the post of European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Affairs to which he has been proposed by Malta after the resignation of Commissioner John Dalli on 16 October. In accordance with Parliament's rules, the Members evaluated the Commissioner-designate on the basis of his general competence, European commitment and personal independence. They also assessed the knowledge of his prospective portfolio which would be health and consumer policy, with IMCO focussing on consumer protection, as well as his communication skills. The Parliament in full house is set to vote on the nomination of Dr Borg during the November plenary session in Strasbourg.

LINKS: [Subject file](#) [Hearing's document](#)



DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON D.C. AND ITS FOLLOW-UP

As the parliamentary committee responsible for consumer protection, customs, public procurement, standards and product safety it is particularly relevant for the IMCO Committee to closely follow the developments on the other side of the Atlantic. The IMCO delegation to Washington D.C. offered participating Members the opportunity to establish contacts and exchange views with representatives of the American civil society, the US public administration and counterparts in Congress. The delegation took place mid-July and was composed out of eight IMCO Members and the Chairman, Malcolm Harbour.

The delegation commenced on **16 July** with a briefing by the EP's Liaison Office (EPLO) on current political situation and the presidential election. After the meetings with the US Chamber of Commerce and various consumer organisations, Members met with Chairman of the FTC John Leibowitz and David Vladeck, the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Protection. Other highlights of the delegation included meetings with Mrs. Inez Tenenbaum, Chairwoman of the Consumer Product Safety Committee (CPSC) and Ambassador Miriam Sapiro, Deputy US Trade Representative.

In Congress Members had an even busier agenda which obliged the delegation to be split into two groups led by Chairman Harbour and Andreas Schwab respectively. Members met US co-Chair of the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue (TLD) Clifford Stearns on regulatory cooperation, Chairman James Lankford on procurement, Chairwoman Candice Miller on customs, Chairman Mark Pryor on consumer protection issues and Chairwoman Shelley Moore Capito and Chairman Scott Garrett on consumer credit.



(Ambassador Miriam Sapiro, Deputy US Trade Representative and Malcolm Harbour, IMCO Chairman)

Back in Brussels, IMCO Members showed continued engagement as Ambassador Sapiro attended the **September Strasbourg plenary** and Director David Vladeck addressed the committee beginning of October. IMCO coordinators also met with Chairwoman Tenenbaum on **16 October** in the margin of the Consumer Protection week in Brussels. A video conference with Administrator Jeff Weiss of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) is currently being set-up.

FURTHER INFO: [Notice to Members on the delegation](#)



(IMCO Members and John Leibowitz, Chairman of the FTC and David Vladeck, Director of the Bureau of Consumer Protection)

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