(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Concerns of European citizens and business with the functioning of the Single Market

P7_TA(2012)0395


(2014/C 72 E/01)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the Commission working document entitled 'Single Market through the lens of the people: a snapshot of citizens’ and businesses’ 20 main concerns' (SEC(2011)1003),

— having regard to the Commission communication entitled 'Single Market Act - Twelve levers to boost growth and strengthen confidence - “Working together to create new growth”' (COM(2011)0206),

— having regard to the Commission communication entitled “Towards a Single Market Act - For a highly competitive social market economy: 50 proposals for improving our work, business and exchanges with one another” (COM(2010)0608),


— having regard to its resolution of 4 September 2007 on the single market review (1) and the Commission staff working document entitled ‘The single market review: one year on’ (SEC(2008)3064),

— having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Smart Regulation in the European Union’ (COM(2010)0343),


— having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘A Europe of Results – Applying Community Law’ (COM(2007)0502),

— having regard to the Commission recommendation of 29 June 2009 measures to improve the functioning of the single market (1),

— having regard to the Council conclusions of 10 December 2010 on the Single Market Act,

— having regard to Professor Mario Monti’s report to the Commission on revitalising the single market,

— having regard to its resolution of 20 May 2010 on delivering a single market to consumers and citizens (2),

— having regard to the Internal Market Scoreboard No 21 (2010) and to its resolutions of 9 March 2010 (3) and 23 September 2008 (4) on the Internal Market Scoreboard,

— having regard to Articles 258 to 260 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),

— having regard to Articles 7, 10 and 15 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

— having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection and the opinions of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, the Committee on Transport and Tourism, the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Committee on Petitions (A7-0310/2012),

A. whereas the document ‘The Single Market through the lens of the people: a snapshot of citizens’ and businesses’ 20 main concerns’ confirms that there is a gap between the expectations and the reality of the single market;

B. whereas there are still too many obstacles preventing Europeans from taking full advantage of the existence of the single market, thus hindering the development of a sense of belonging to the same community; whereas there is an urgent need to resolve these difficulties in order to allow Europeans to benefit fully from their right to freedom of movement and the advantages resulting from membership of the European Union;

C. whereas, in the context of the economic, financial and social crisis currently affecting Europe, it is essential to abolish obstacles and relaunch the single market, and thus contribute to innovation, growth, the promotion of competitiveness, job creation and increased market confidence, whereas deepening the single market will benefit all European citizens, thereby contributing to the territorial, economic and social cohesion of the Union;

D. whereas the single market constitutes a key element in realising the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy, and in achieving the objectives of intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth, whereas the new paradigm for political thought on relaunching the single market should focus on the citizens, on consumers and, in particular, on SMEs;

(2) OJ C 161 E, 31.5.2011, p. 84.
E. whereas European citizens have found banks imposing a range of impediments and complex and discriminatory demands when they want to open a bank account, with the result that 30 million European citizens have no bank account and mobility is thus impeded; whereas according to Eurobarometer data 29% of consumers surveyed find it difficult to compare the different offers with respect to current accounts and are thus unable to choose the account most appropriate to their requirements;

F. whereas some 30% of European citizens are unaware that they have the right to crossborder healthcare and to be reimbursed for it; whereas only one in three European citizens knows that they a European health insurance card is needed when travelling abroad and that this card is indispensable for short-term stays, such as holidays, business trips or periods studying in another country;

G. whereas the free movement of goods is a cornerstone of the EU, and the Union has introduced a uniform type-approval system and harmonised registration certificates for motor vehicles; whereas, therefore, buying a car in or transferring a car to another Member State has become much easier; whereas European citizens who move to other Member States and intend to take their car with them are faced with onerous and complex procedures, requiring documentation that does not exist in their own Member State and payment of additional taxes; whereas European citizens intending to purchase a car in another Member State experience similar difficulties, whereas Parliament receives numerous complaints from citizens faced with cumbersome formalities, very often relating to the re-registration of their vehicles in another Member State and the associated additional costs; whereas at the same time the Union and the Member States need to ensure that the re-registration of stolen vehicles with falsified registration certificates does not occur;

H. whereas the EU rules on passengers’ rights provide a minimum level of protection for citizens and thus facilitate mobility and social integration; whereas they help create a level playing field for transport operators within as well as across modes; whereas the EU legal framework protecting passengers’ rights needs to guarantee a minimum standard of consumer protection that is able to withstand evolving commercial practices such as add-on charges, as well as covering cases of bankruptcy or insolvency of airlines; whereas the Union needs to react to new multimodal mobility patterns;

I. whereas the elimination of regulatory and physical barriers to the creation of a European Single Railway area, particularly in the case of freight, would help boost growth within the Single Market;

J. whereas 62% of European consumers would like to change energy supplier and switch to a cheaper tariff, but their freedom of choice is limited by the lack of clear and comparable information and the obstacles to ending their existing energy supply contracts; whereas such a change would represent a saving of EUR 100 per customer, or EUR 13 billion across Europe;

K. whereas the deepening of the Single Market in the mobile telecommunications field, particularly regarding roaming, would be greatly welcomed by European citizens;

L. whereas 26% of European consumers surveyed have experienced problems with internet services provision; whereas the process of switching from one internet service provider to another is complicated and expensive, and consumers frequently experience poor quality of service and uneven enforcement of national rules;

M. whereas lack of information on consumer rights, incorrect application of legislation and difficulty in resolving disputes over crossborder purchases have led to consumer distrust of on-line purchases, preventing the EU from having a genuine digital market at the service of citizens and businesses; whereas figures from the European Consumer Centres (ECCs) show that online purchases are responsible for the majority (59%) of complaints made by consumers;

N. whereas businesses continue to face problems accessing public procurement contracts in other Member States, both as contractors and as subcontractors, due in particular to differing national practices in public procurement and to the complex administrative requirements existing in some Member States, as well as to language barriers;
O. whereas improving the access of SMEs to funding is of major importance in the current economic climate, both for the survival and development of the enterprises themselves and for strengthening entrepreneurship and development in Europe generally,

P. whereas special attention must be paid to people with disabilities so that they can make the most of the single market, taking action to ensure that new electronic content is also fully available to disabled people, in accordance with the international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (1) and with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which set out accessibility obligations (2);

I. Introduction


2. Congratulates the Commission on this significant initiative in response to the difficulties and concerns faced by citizens and businesses in exercising the rights conferred on them by the EU; considers, however, that the working document could have gone into more depth;

3. Is convinced that the completion of the internal market is necessary for the economic and social wellbeing of the citizens of the EU; calls on the Commission to present concrete actions and feasible proposals to resolve the issues identified as the 20 main concerns of the citizens;

4. Believes that, in this time of severe financial crisis, the EU needs to step up its efforts to eliminate barriers to the smooth functioning of the single market, in particular in sectors which can act as motors for sustainable growth, such as crossborder business and entrepreneurial activities, service provision, mobility, access to finance and financial literacy;

5. Recognises that increased mobility of qualified labour can contribute to making Europe more competitive; believes that to this end it is necessary to adopt a modern framework for the recognition of professional qualifications, by making use of the Internal Market Information System (IMI) alert mechanism;

6. Welcomes the introduction of a European Professional Card supported by the Internal Market Information System, in the context of which the criteria for such a card are now being evaluated with the aim of facilitating administrative procedures and voluntary crossborder mobility within the EU; believes, moreover, that the IMI will be able to achieve faster cooperation between Member State of origin and host state, thus helping address the persisting mismatches in the EU labour market;

7. Stresses that the mobility of workers in different Member States must be a voluntary act and must always go hand in hand with full respect for labour rights;

8. Expresses its concern over the fraudulent employment agencies which engage in the exploitation of labour throughout the EU, thus undermining the proper functioning of the free movement of workers, and calls on the Commission and Council to draw up an action plan to address this issue, for example by closer cooperation between national labour inspectorates.

9. Stresses the urgent need to improve citizens' awareness with regard to taxation in the EU and to reduce tax barriers for crossborder workers and employers, in order to facilitate mobility and promote crossborder business initiatives while fighting opportunities for tax evasion and tax fraud;

(1) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0. - http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/
10. Emphasises, accordingly, the need for a socially justifiable fiscal policy, playing a redistributive role and geared towards growth, which will be capable of dealing with the major issues of fiscal competition, effective monitoring, taxation of offshore companies and the eradication of the tax havens currently flourishing inside the EU;

11. Calls on the Commission to strengthen programmes that contribute to improving the entrepreneurship, internationalisation and competitiveness of European SMEs, which are the backbone of the European economy;

12. Calls on the Commission to encourage SMEs to recruit young people and to strengthen mobility programmes that encourage the young to enhance their skills, thereby becoming more employable and able to enter the labour market;

13. Welcomes further legislative initiatives aimed at creating a fully integrated Single Market in order to increase competition and efficiency and provide greater choice for European consumers.

14. Stresses the role of the internet in business efficiency and the rapidly increasing role of e-commerce in creating new markets, growth and opportunities for businesses; stresses the need for to ensure fully operational ADR and ODR systems, reinforcing the confidence of consumers and businesses in the digital market; calls for the simplification of licensing systems, the creation of an efficient framework for copyright, and action to prevent product and brand piracy;

15. Recalls that Article 194 TFEU lays down that Union policy on energy shall be driven by a spirit of solidarity between Member States; stresses that the completion of the internal market in energy should take account of the structural socioeconomic differences of the European regions and should not impose burdens on Member States;

16. Notes that with the adoption in 2011 of legislation on passengers’ rights in the case of bus and coach transport in, the Union now has a comprehensive and integrated set of rules on basic passengers’ rights covering all modes of transport;

17. Considers that the main goal of the EU banking sector should be to provide capital to the real economy, this being one of the preconditions for the development of a knowledge-driven single market that fosters growth, competition and jobs;

18. Welcomes the reform of public procurement proposed by the Commission, and considers that establishing common principles at EU level, together with flexible, clear and simple rules on public procurement, would enable companies, and above all SMEs, to better exploit the opportunities offered by crossborder public procurement; emphasises that it is essential to establish an EU-wide public e-procurement system, which would ensure greater transparency and competitiveness and allow public money to be used more efficiently;

19. Regrets the fact that the legislative proposal aimed at ensuring the full accessibility of public sector websites by 2015 has been deferred; welcomes the roadmap for digital inclusion, and calls for the implementation of the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) for e-government portals;

20. Draws attention to the importance of developing European standards, which are absolutely necessary both for the realisation of the Single Market and for increasing the EU’s international competitiveness; calls on the Commission to ensure easier access to European standards for SMEs and micro-enterprises;

21. Points out that differences in the regulation of e-signatures in the Member States remain a major obstacle to the proper functioning of the EU Single Market, particularly the provision of services; considers it essential to establish a single system for the recognition of e-signatures throughout the EU;
22. Emphasises the importance for e-invoicing of ensuring legal certainty, a transparent technical environment and open and compatible solutions grounded in legal requirements, commercial operations and common technical standards, in order to facilitate the widespread adoption of this practice;

23. Stresses that all EU citizens who do not already hold a bank account in the Member State where they have lodged a request for one should have access to basic banking services; considers, in this regard, that basic banking services facilitate access for low-income consumers to basic payment instruments for the deposit, transfer and withdrawal of cash in the single market, notably with respect to crossborder commuting; calls, therefore, on the Commission to make a legislative proposal to ensure consumer-friendly procedures for opening bank accounts across the Union;

24. Is concerned that EU citizens who inherit, retire or transfer capital abroad are frequently faced with double taxation; calls for increased efforts to alleviate this situation; regrets that the Commission has only proposed a recommendation in the area of inheritance taxation;

25. Reiterates its call on the Commission to assess the different rules on pension funds and the need to improve portability of pensions, in particular occupational pensions, when workers change employer and move from one Member State to another; calls, as a matter of urgency, for a revision of the Pension Funds Directive;

26. Stresses the need for the EU institutions and the Member States to step up efforts to ensure a single market that is fairer, more operational, more competitive and more effective;

II. Governance

27. Stresses the need to develop a holistic approach to the single market, centred on finding practical and useful solutions for citizens, consumers and SMEs so that they can fully benefit from its advantages, while at the same time not giving rise to over-regulation;

28. Reaffirms the need to strengthen cooperation and interaction between Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Member States, so that citizens feel more included in the main projects and day-to-day activities of the EU and so that EU action, where deemed necessary, is targeted and useful; stresses that the dialogue with civil society is essential to restore confidence in the single market;

29. Recognises, that for the smooth functioning of the internal market it is also important to protect social rights, and recalls the recommendation made by Professor Monti in his report to the Commission that ‘the social dimension of the internal market should receive greater attention by delivering on the commitment to real “social impact assessments” based on the development of more sophisticated methodologies and upgraded statistical information’.

30. Urges the Member States to modernise public administration, simplifying the regulatory framework, and to encourage the use of electronic facilities such as e-government;

31. Encourages the Member States to exchange best practice, so that European legislation is applied uniformly;

32. Welcomes the Commission’s decision to refine its management database for handling cases related to the application of EU law (1);

(1) CHAP - Complaints Handling and Public Enquiries registration system; EU PILOT – Problem-solving with Member States; NIF – Database for registering cases of non-communication.
33. Calls on the Commission to develop the ‘Your Europe’ portal in order to turn it into a genuine digital ‘one-stop shop’ providing citizens and businesses with information about the single market; calls on the Member States to supply the national data currently lacking in the ‘Your Europe’ portal as soon as possible, to provide more links from their national government portals related to the various sections of the website, and to develop references to ‘Your Europe’ from relevant local and national administration portals so as to facilitate access for citizens;

34. Stresses the usefulness of the ‘Your Europe Advice’ facility, which allows citizens free access to personalised information; calls on the Commission and the Member States to take action with a view to significantly raising citizens’ awareness of the Europe Direct telephone facility;

35. Welcomes the positive role played by SOLVIT, ‘Your Europe Advice’, the Enterprise Europe Network, the European Consumer Centres, the Europe Direct Contact Centre and the European Employment Service in providing information and assistance to citizens, consumers and entrepreneurs in the internal market; calls on the Commission to find ways to improve coordination between these services and avoid duplication of efforts and resources;

36. Calls on the Commission to make every effort to deliver a single, live online point of contact for citizens and consumers, via its offices in each Member State; believes these points of contact should operate in close cooperation with the European Parliament’s information offices in order to make a comprehensive ‘one-stop shop’ available to every citizen; takes the view that creating such a point of contact in each Member State would truly help make the internal market more accessible and provide a more efficient, user-friendly service which would not only give information but also communicate to people, in an easily understandable way, the concrete opportunities offered by the internal market; believes this would help prevent confusion on the part of the average citizen, the consumer and business;

37. Calls on the Commission to analyse the involvement of local and regional authorities in the strategy for expanding the Single Market Information System; calls on the Member States to improve their civil services’ understanding of their obligations regarding use of the IMI, and to ensure that their employees receive appropriate training;

38. Stresses that three shortcomings lie behind the concerns of citizens with regard to the operation of the single market, i.e. lack of information, gaps in application, and a legislative vacuum; believes that simultaneous action must be taken to eliminate these three shortcomings if the operation of the Single Market is to be optimised;

39. Stresses the importance of SMEs to the European economy, and calls on the Commission, together with the Member States, to improve the ‘SME test’ so as to ensure that it is applied consistently and coherently across all relevant policy areas and is incorporated into the overall assessment of proposals, so as to reduce the basic obstacles, bureaucracy and administrative overheads that impede the development of SMEs in terms of contributing to a more favourable business environment that will promote entrepreneurship, innovation, investment, growth and job creation; calls on the Commission to undertake a review of all directives and regulations which impact negatively on SMEs, and to submit a report with recommendations by June 2013;

40. Recalls the decision of Parliament calling on all its committees to apply the principles of the ‘SME test’ to legislative reports when they have been voted on by the relevant committee and are being submitted to plenary for approval, and emphasises the need for rapid implementation of this decision;

41. Considers that close adherence to the ‘Think Small First’ principle would ensure that future legislation does not introduce further difficulties and frustrations for citizens and businesses in the Single Market;
42. Emphasises that the Commission should step up its efforts to focus on the impact of regulations and directives on industry, SMEs and micro-enterprises with Better Regulation targets; stresses, in particular, the need for the burden reduction programme to continue beyond 2012 with a more ambitious and expanded scope, and for the introduction of regulatory burden offsetting;

43. Calls on the Commission to strengthen its commitment to assessing whether there is real added value of action at EU level before work begins on a draft proposal;

44. Welcomes the Commission’s announcement of a programme to eliminate cost burdens for SMEs by means of a presumption that micro-enterprises will be exempted from burdensome rules unless a case for their inclusion is explicitly made;

III. Information and communication

45. Emphasises that there is a lack of information about the single market, which often means that citizens and enterprises do not know or do not understand their rights and obligations, and do not know how to obtain the required answers or assistance; emphasises the need to design information that takes account of the specific characteristics of vulnerable consumer groups;

46. Emphasises that it is equally important that citizens can make known their concerns in relation to the internal market and can forward their suggestions in such a way that their voice will be more effectively heard by both the Commission and Parliament;

47. Calls on the Commission to make use of all available technological resources in order to launch a dialogue with the citizens on the single market, by organising interactive information campaigns, prioritising the 20 main concerns, informing citizens and enterprises concerning the benefits of the Single Market, practical and concrete solutions to their day-to-day problems, and their rights, and encouraging them to participate in the creation of a competitive, fair and balanced market, while also paying special attention to strengthening the Points of Single Contact (PSCs);

48. Welcomes the activity of the PSCs, which have the role of simplifying access to information on conducting business in the Member States, centralising in a single national point of contact all necessary formalities and administrative requirements for establishing or expanding a business across borders;

49. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to make every effort to devise useful communication strategies and information mechanisms relating to citizens’ enjoyment of their social rights and benefits across the EU;

50. Stresses the importance of involving local and regional authorities and organisations, jointly with civil society, in information campaigns, paying particular attention to information campaigns in schools and universities in order to involve the next generation and prepare it for a more active European citizenship;

51. Is convinced that consumer confidence in a well-functioning financial services market promotes financial stability, growth, efficiency and innovation in the long term; emphasises, therefore, the need to ensure that consumers have better access to information and independent advice in this sector, and that conflicts of interest are avoided;

52. Emphasises the fact that significant variations exist between energy bills, depending on the supplier, with regard to the quantity and quality of information provided to European energy consumers; stresses that it is essential to provide consumers with timely and adequate information on consumption and pricing, so that they can choose the energy supplier they wish;
53. Encourages the establishment of a common methodology and a common, comprehensive and easy-to-use format for energy bills, with a minimum level of information that suppliers should include when billing, so that consumers can understand the content of their energy bills everywhere in the EU and thus use energy more economically and efficiently;

54. Urges the Member States to provide NRAs with the powers and resources needed to exercise their duties, e.g. monitoring and proper customer complaint handling; asks the Commission and ACER to propose recommendations on how the NRAs’ supervisory powers could be improved; calls on the Commission to promote improvements to the coordination and exchange of best practice and information among NRAs and the competent national and European authorities;

55. Calls on the Commission, together with the Member States, to develop a digital single market that is worthy of the name and competitive and will serve European consumers and businesses, in particular SMEs; recalls that the existence of a genuine European digital single market will be of socio-economic benefit to European consumers in general, in particular the inhabitants of isolated and less accessible regions and those with any kind of disability, as well as to enterprises in the EU, in particular SMEs, which will thus be able to access new markets;

56. Stresses that, in order for a genuine European digital single market to be created, consumer confidence and security need to be increased, by guaranteeing the protection of consumers’ personal data and the security of digital signatures, improving dispute resolution mechanisms, and enhancing confidence and security regarding the means of payment used;

57. Recalls the need to fill the remaining gaps in the field of contract law, as well as to adopt effective instruments for clearing the obstacles that result from disparities in the rules applicable to contracts, which create barriers to trade, additional transaction costs and legal uncertainty for enterprises, thereby also causing consumers to mistrust the single market;

58. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take appropriate measures to ensure that all citizens are fully informed of their rights under the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) and of the existing financial obligations as regards using health services and care in different Member States; stresses that this information must be easily accessible and understandable (including electronic availability), and must be accessible to citizens with disabilities;

59. Calls on the Commission to ensure that all citizens entitled to the EHIC are issued with the card on request, and that any misapplication of the rules is corrected without delay; calls on Member States to provide information on any additional insurance or other action that may be necessary for citizens to be entitled to the same health care abroad as they enjoy at home;

60. Urges the Member States to simplify and accelerate the administrative procedures for reimbursement of treatment received abroad, and to ensure that their social insurance and health insurance systems provide sufficient protection for mobile citizens;

61. Highlights the lack of information for officials and other employees of regional and local government on the opportunities existing for European and international mobility; stresses that the European and international mobility of these officials and employees will help create more modern and efficient administrations in the Member States, a factor which is crucial to the implementation of the EU acquis, as well as enabling the exchange of best practice;
IV. Legislation/Transposition

62. Emphasises that the success of EU law is always dependent on its application and its transposition within a reasonable time into Member States’ national legislation; considers regular, careful and effective controls to be essential in this area, and calls on the Commission to intervene in the event of deficiencies in transposition and to continue to cooperate closely with Parliament in this regard;

63. Recognises that although the number of infringement proceedings initiated by the Commission has decreased, there were still about 2100 such proceedings under way at the end of 2010;

64. Notes the large number of petitions received by Parliament’s Committee on Petitions relating to the problems citizens face within the internal market, particularly as regards the incorrect transposition or implementation of EU law; calls on the Commission to incorporate in its report the findings and results of the petitions submitted to that committee; stresses that the petitions procedure needs to be better utilised in order to improve the EU’s legislative processes, particularly as regards legislative remedies to barriers to crossborder trade and enforcement of consumer rights;

65. Calls on the Member States to prioritise the correct and timely transposition of legislation relating to the Single Market and to reduce levels of non-compliance; invites them to implement a ‘Single Market test’ within the framework of their national legislation, taking into account the impact of its standards on citizens and enterprises in the context of the internal market;

66. Underlines that the procedures for reclaiming VAT across borders need to be made less bureaucratic and cumbersome for businesses; stresses that there should also be increased access to crossborder venture capital financing; calls on the Commission and the Member States, since legislative and implementation gaps in the single market legislation have been identified, to reinforce their efforts to effectively implement the relevant legislation, especially on issues related to social protection;

67. Calls on the Commission to include reference to the affected area of activity and its impact on the single market when initiating infringement proceedings for incorrect transposition of, or failure to transpose, EU legislation;

68. Urges the Commission, with regard to infringement proceedings, to make full use of the changes introduced by Article 260 TFEU;

69. Supports the Commission’s efforts to simplify the cross-border transferability of cars, and calls on the Member States to fully implement the principles of EU law on the registration of cars in other Member States; recalls in this regard that cars (right-hand drive vehicles included) that are compliant with the relevant EU type-approval should be eligible for registration in Member States, and calls on the Commission to increase the security of harmonised registration certificates in order to minimise the risk of re-registration of stolen vehicles with falsified registration certificates;

70. Calls on the Commission to apply zero tolerance to any discriminatory rules and practices by Member States in the field of employment which run counter to EU law, and to initiate appropriate proceedings without delay in the event of non-compliance; also calls on the Commission not to tolerate any other forms of discriminatory or unjustifiable practices, controls or requirements hampering European workers and employers in the exercise of their rights under EU law;

71. Recalls that freedom of movement is a fundamental right which workers must be able to exercise without discrimination based on nationality between workers of the Member States as regards employment, remuneration and other conditions of work and employment; believes that, in order to ensure this freedom, workers should be properly informed, adequate redress mechanisms should be put in place, and all Member States should strictly implement the relevant EU rules;
72. Calls on the Commission to carefully monitor both the transposition and the effective application of Directive 2000/78/EC in the Member States, and to intervene in the event that any deficiencies are observed; calls on the Member States and the Council to give priority to the urgent adoption of the proposal for a directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;

73. Emphasises the need to improve working conditions and ensure adequate protection, without any form of discrimination, for workers posted in the EU; calls for action to improve the implementation and application of the Posting of Workers Directive, in close cooperation with the social partners; welcomes the conclusions of the Single Market Forum in this regard;

74. Recalls that the EU legislation in force protects the rights of consumers and provides a solid foundation for a competitive European energy market, but that it has not yet been transposed properly into national legislation in several Member States;

75. Urging all Member States to fully implement the third energy package and other related EU legislation, respecting the agreed deadlines; asks the Commission to undertake vigorous monitoring of the transposition of these rules;

76. Calls on the Commission to continue to promote best practice with regard to the transposition of legislation relating to the single market;

77. Stresses that the coherent and harmonised implementation and enforcement of passenger protection throughout the Union is of key importance for travelling citizens, including people with reduced mobility, as well as for ensuring a level playing field for transport operators; recognises that people with disabilities very often encounter obstacles and barriers when travelling that exclude them from many of the opportunities of the single market, and calls on the Commission to pay greater attention to this aspect in relation to passengers' rights;

78. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that passenger rights legislation is implemented correctly, that European citizens are aware of the rights of passengers in the EU, and, especially, that those rights are respected;

79. Stresses the need to address the problems experienced by citizens and businesses; notes that despite the minimal evidence included in the Working Paper, many of the problem areas identified have been the subject of recent impact assessments and proposals by the Commission; strongly believes that where action is proposed the Commission must produce robust and conclusive evidence in favour of the policy option chosen in the draft legislation; calls on Parliament to give full consideration to the accuracy and persuasiveness of the impact assessments produced by the Commission when considering draft proposals, in order that adopted legislation meets the needs of citizens and businesses alike;

80. Considers it important to exchange information and promote cooperation between national systems, and, in this context, welcomes the recently achieved interconnection of business registers (1); continues to urge crossborder cooperation on administration and improved networking through central platforms; welcomes the Commission's initiatives to this effect, e.g. for developing a system for the electronic transmission of social security information between national social security systems;

81. Emphasises that the crossborder enforcement and recognition of decisions and the legal effects of documents are central to mobility in the internal market; looks forward to the prompt application of the regulation on succession rights in all EU Member States; calls on the Commission to continue its work in relation to the recognition of the legal effects of civil status records, on the basis of the Green Paper of 2010 (\(^1\)) and the consultations of 2011 – and regards the legislative proposals planned for 2013 with interest;

82. Notes the objective of improved legislation, and believes that the Commission, Parliament and the Council should redouble their efforts to improve the strategy for smart regulation;

83. Endorses the commitment shown to addressing the issue of regulatory burdens; in this regard, recalls the previous commitment of Parliament to require the Commission to identify equivalent cost offsets when proposing new legislation; further recalls Parliament’s request that the programme for administrative burden reduction be extended and expanded, and therefore looks forward to proposals for reducing administrative burdens and regulatory impediments, since these would address many of the main concerns of citizens and businesses regarding the Single Market;

84. Stresses that, despite the simplification of legislation and the reduction in the administrative burden as regards the utilisation of internal market freedoms by businesses, it is generally necessary to secure the safety and health provisions that protect consumers and employees;

85. Invites the Commission to submit all new European regulations to an 'e-commerce test';

V. Suggestions

86. Calls on the Commission to monitor the 20 main concerns of citizens and businesses in relation to the Single Market after two years, and to update them also calls on it to draw up a table for each of the concerns highlighted, indicating which actors are responsible for solutions to each of the root causes identified;

87. Calls on the Commission, in future reports, to highlight corresponding actions for which it is clearly responsible, such as taking timely and appropriate action in the event of incorrect transposition of EU legislation by Member States, ensuring adequate implementation of EU law, and reviewing inadequate legislation;

88. Calls on the Commission to present the document ‘The new Single Market Act - Twelve levers to boost growth and strengthen confidence - “Working together to create new growth” ’ in the second half of 2012;

89. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to focus their information campaigns during the European Year of Citizens 2013 on the areas of those concerns that relate to rights based on EU citizenship, since these, on the basis of the selection methodology of the report, truly reflect what matters most to EU citizens in their everyday lives in the internal market;

90. Calls on the Commission to find ways of amalgamating the EU Citizenship Report with the report entitled ‘The Single Market through the lens of the people’ in future, so as to avoid duplication and confusion and guard against the risk of decoupling problems from solutions;

(\(^1\)) COM(2010)0747.
91. Calls on the Commission, together with the Member States, regional and local authorities and civil society representatives, to launch regular European information campaigns in national, regional and local media, as well as interactive campaigns, strengthening the dialogue with citizens on the benefits of the single market, citizens' rights and responsibilities, and where to obtain information or assistance to resolve problems; calls on the Commission to monitor and control the effectiveness and success of these information campaigns;

92. Calls on the Commission to ensure that existing tools such as SOLVIT, the Internal Market Scoreboard, Internal Market Information System, 'Your Europe Advice' and 'Your Europe' are effectively interconnected so as to make it possible to monitor the proper and timely transposition of EU directives;

93. Emphasises the need to support the EURES system and its effective interconnectedness with national work placement systems, as one of the means of combating unemployment in the EU, as also to address the phenomenon of inability to fill vacancies due to lack of candidates with relevant qualifications;

94. Urges the Commission to undertake an evaluation of the areas in which Community regulation simultaneously achieves both the objective of simplified and direct application by Member States and the objectives of the Single Market;

95. Calls on the Commission to promote urgent measures aimed at overcoming the imbalances in energy infrastructure existing in the Union which represent an obstacle to the completion of the internal energy market and the achievement of the Europe 2020 goals;

96. Calls on the Member States to use ICT tools to improve transparency and accountability, reduce administrative burdens, improve administrative processes, reduce CO₂ emissions, save public resources and contribute to a more participatory democracy, while at the same time strengthening the level of trust and confidence;

97. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, while complying with Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 and Article 153 TFEU, to undertake studies to ensure the continuity of social security protection for mobile citizens in the EU and equal treatment with nationals, also taking into consideration an optional, voluntary and transferable social security system at European level, complementary to the general system, in order to set up closer cooperation on social policy; previous ideas relating to a ‘28th regime’ of social security systems should be updated and incorporated into the studies;

98. Urges the Member States to take whatever action is necessary to simplify the complex national administrative procedures and ensure that workers, employers and other parties involved in a cross-border employment situation have access to all required information on rights and obligations related to their employment, such as social security, including unemployment protection, health care and taxation rules; considers that this information needs to be available, as far as possible in electronic form, before, during and after the mobility experience;

99. Urges the Commission to establish a central coordination point at EU level aimed at recording the concerns of mobile workers, employers and other interested parties, in order to devise solutions between Member States and prevent problems arising from mobile employment relationships, including the posting of workers;

100. Calls on the Member States to treat non-EU family members of EU nationals as bona fide clients throughout the administrative procedures they have to undergo;
101. Calls on the Member States to establish a ‘one-stop shop’ for all mobile people in the EU, enabling them to handle their work- and home-related administrative matters and be informed of their rights and obligations at a single location in the host country, including the possibility of carrying out and managing administrative procedures on-line, in order to improve the effective exercise of rights by citizens moving within the EU;

102. Calls on the Commission to ensure access to a basic payment account at a reasonable price for all European Union citizens, in order to increase mobility;

103. Welcomes the Commission’s proposals for facilitating access to crossborder health care; urges the Commission and the Member States to ensure the swift and effective implementation of Directive 2011/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2011 on the application of patients’ rights in crossborder health care, taking due account of the principles of universality, access to quality care, equity and solidarity; calls on the Commission and the Member States, in addition, to continue working towards the target of widespread deployment of telemedicine and e-health services by 2020; supports, furthermore, the pilot projects aimed at ensuring EU citizens secure online access to their patient data and interoperability of patient records, thus providing patients with continuity of care;

104. Calls on the Commission to put forward a legislative proposal on the roadworthiness testing of motor vehicles, with a view to reducing the administrative burden for citizens and industry while guaranteeing the dynamic development of testing methods and test content and at the same time ensuring the highest possible level of road safety;

105. Calls for the mutual recognition of technical controls between Member States, on a basis of common definitions and comparable test standards when a vehicle is transferred from one Member State to another; proposes the establishment of a European database to centralise the technical data of all vehicles, in order to enable Europe-wide comparability and facilitate crossborder vehicle registration; calls on the Member States to minimise the financial cost to the public of registering vehicles in another Member State, by avoiding unnecessary costs through a common approach;

106. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the more rigorous enforcement of interoperability between national transport and mobility services, products and systems, such as those subject to EU rules relating to road toll systems or the ERTMS, alongside European-level integrated information, pricing and ticketing in the fields of public and intermodal mobility;

107. Urges the Commission to facilitate access to microfinance facilities for the setting-up and development of small businesses, particularly those that intend to pursue crossborder operations;

108. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to facilitate investment opportunities for innovative start-ups by removing the obstacles that hinder the emergence of an EU-wide venture capital market;

109. Calls on the Member States to make use of existing structures and the creation of ‘one-stop shops’ in order to simplify and facilitate access to information enabling SMEs to apply for European, national and local funds, bearing in mind that ‘one-stop shops’ have greater added value when they are created at the expense of existing administration and thus do not place additional burdens on the taxpayer; stresses the importance of ‘one-stop shops’ as fundamental starting-points to attract and enable private investments in the field of research and energy, and calls on the Commission to reinforce the measures for further simplification and transparency of the European, national and local financing frameworks; urges the Member States to facilitate SMEs’ access to funds by simplifying the rules on data submission, and to promote online data repositories for certificates and other supporting documents;
110. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to secure agreements enabling SMEs to operate throughout the EU and to commercialise their ideas, by granting them better access to markets and reducing red tape;

111. Calls on the Commission to draw up a legislative proposal offering passengers better protection in the event of airline insolvency, for example through mandatory insurance for airlines or the establishment of a guarantee fund;

112. Draws attention to the fact that it is still difficult for passengers to book and buy multimodal tickets within the EU, and calls on the Commission, the Member States and transport companies to take action for the creation of an integrated multimodal ticketing system;

113. Calls on the Commission to submit a proposal on passengers’ rights where more than one mode of transport is used, so as to enable the legislation to keep pace with evolving multimodal mobility patterns.

114. Calls on the Commission to reformulate the Internal Market Information System (IMI), widening the scope and improving the operability of administrative cooperation, and to rethink the SOLVIT programme so as to give it a new framework and adequate resources, particularly human resources, in order to ensure that all centres have enough experienced and sufficient staff to enable them to deal with the queries submitted to them in a fully satisfactory manner;

115. Repeats its call on Member States to improve early language learning, to put in place a system of recognition of formal and informal education, including lifelong learning, and of competences acquired in another Member State, and to ensure better coordination with labour market needs, in order to create a future labour force with comparable qualifications that is beneficial to a common European labour market and enhances productivity levels; emphasises, moreover, the need to continue with efforts towards equivalence of national certification systems through the European Qualifications Framework;

116. Takes the view that educational institutions should indicate, in a supplement to the diplomas awarded by them, how their national diplomas can be compared and evaluated vis-à-vis diplomas awarded in other Member States, particularly in neighbouring countries;

117. Highlights the success of the automatic recognition procedure contained in Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, and calls for an assessment to be made of the possibility of extending it to more professions;

118. Calls on the Member States to perform the necessary actions for accessing the Structural and Cohesion Funds and to utilise the amounts obtained for programmes related to vocational training, in order to ensure further support for SMEs;

119. Points to the positive results obtained in certain Member States where energy-saving requirements placed on energy companies have led to numerous advantageous results, including the more widespread use of smart electricity meters for the benefit of consumers;

120. Calls on the Commission to evaluate the possibility of a European exchange programme for officials and other employees of regional and local authorities;

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121. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission.