

# I M C O N e w s l e t t e r



## AT A GLANCE

This issue addresses the main items on the agenda of the **next committee meeting on 24-26 May**: the vote on the reports on Universal service and the 112 emergency number, on a more efficient and fairer retail market and on the cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws. Members will also debate with Commissioners Reding, Šemeta, Dalli and Kroes on their work and legislative programme 2011-2012. The approval and market surveillance of mopeds, motorcycles and quads, ADR, collective redress and mortgage credits are also issues on the agenda, as well as the presentation of a study on net neutrality.

Two **Public hearings** are also scheduled: on the modernisation of Public procurement rules and on the Mutual evaluation process of the Services Directive.

## SELECTED NEWS

### Eurobarometer survey on consumer empowerment

According to a Eurobarometer study published on 11 April 2011, less than 50% of EU consumers surveyed felt confident, knowledgeable and protected as consumers.

Although most consumers do complain to retailers, most of those who do not get a satisfactory response take no further action. A significant number of consumers have problems making everyday calculations, understanding key information and recognising illegal sales practices or knowing their rights. A majority of respondents did not know their right to return, have repaired or replaced a faulty product.

### EU /US: how to reduce regulatory divergences?

On 3 May, the U.S. Department of Commerce/ITA issued a notice in the Federal Registrar asking for public opinion to help "identify opportunities for cooperation between the United States and the European Union to reduce or eliminate divergences in regulatory measures that impede trade in goods in the transatlantic marketplace, in ways that may be unnecessary, as well as any existing or emerging sectors that may benefit from transatlantic regulatory cooperation". This is a direct consequence of discussions held at the High-Level Regulatory Cooperation Forum and the Transatlantic Economic Council in Washington in December 2010. Stakeholders can submit comments by 2 June 2011.

Read the notice [here](#)

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The "**IMCO in the plenary**" section relates to the adoption of the regulation on textile labelling. As regards as the **previous meeting held on 11-13 April**, this issue reports on the presentation by Commissioner Barnier of the 12 levers for the Single Market, on the debate on public procurement and on two the hearings held (on Universal service and on tractors). The meeting held on 19 April with the Polish Minister of the Economy is also addressed.

After a long time, the section "**From the Court of Justice**" is back, which reports about a judgement related to the Services Directive.

The "**Tip of the Month**" introduces EDFE, a database on financial education programmes in the EU. Finally, have a look at the update on the **Chair's Prize** for a lucky friend of IMCO!

Empowered consumers find it easy to identify the best offer, know their rights and seek redress when things go wrong. Vulnerable consumers find it hard to understand the choices they face don't know their rights, suffer more problems and are unwilling to act when things go wrong.

Damages reported by consumers are estimated at around 0.4% of EU GDP with more than one fifth of EU consumers reporting a problem in the last 12 months.

Eurobarometer [report](#) - Read [more](#)

### Rapex report 2010 and safety of helmets

On 12 May, the 2010 annual RAPEX report concerning the EU-wide rapid alert system for dangerous products was presented by Commissioner Dalli. The report includes the trends in the number of products notified, the top product categories, the most active



Member States notifying unsafe products, and the countries of origin. The results of a joint project undertaken by market surveillance authorities in 11 Member States to check the safety of helmets for leisure purposes (cycling, snowboarding, etc) was also presented.

Rapex [web-site](#) - [Report](#) - [Press release](#) and [Q&A](#) - [Helmets report](#)

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[IMCO WEB-SITE](#)

# NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING (24-26 MAY 2011)

[Watch the committee meeting live](#)

[Agenda and meeting documents](#)

## A more efficient and fairer retail market

On 25 May the Committee is to vote on a report on a more efficient and fairer retail market. A total of 155 amendments have been tabled but the political groups agreed on 18 compromise amendments.

During the presentation of her report, on 12 April, the Rapporteur called for an integrated European Action Plan for Retail, aimed at developing a policy framework with concrete proposals for the retail market, and a yearly Retail Market Roundtable to be organised by IMCO.

## Improve accessibility and reliability of the 112 emergency number

On 25 May members will vote on a draft report on "Universal Service and the 112 emergency number". A total of 84 amendments were tabled, but the political groups agreed on 19 compromises amendments.

During the previous committee meeting most members welcomed the content of the draft report, especially on the 112 number, and had a few "fine-tuning" suggestions, the majority of which are now included in compromises. The report underlines the importance of Universal Service obligations as a safety net for social and geographical inclusiveness.

**RAPPORTEUR:** Sylvana Rapti (S&D, EL) - [Dossier](#)

**PLENARY VOTE:** 23 June 2011

## Enforcement of consumer protection law

On 25 May IMCO will vote on a draft report on the amending of a regulation aimed at abolishing the barriers to cross-border cooperation between public enforcement authorities to detect, investigate and bring about the cessation of intra-EU infringements of the laws which protect consumers' interests.

During the previous meeting members welcomed the rapporteur's proposal to add a 'review clause' asking the Commission to undertake an assessment of the effectiveness and operational mechanisms of the Regulation by 2013.

**RAPPORTEUR:** Mitro Repo (S&D, FI) - [Dossier](#)

## Commissioners Reding, Šemeta, Dalli and Kroes present their work programme 2011-2012



### Empowering consumers

On 24 May afternoon, members will hold a debate on Alternative Dispute Resolution schemes (ADR), also known as 'out-of-court mechanisms' which aim to help the consumer who is unable to reach an agreement directly with the trader. The Committee will also exchange views on how to obtain a coherent approach to European Collective Redress.

Both the subjects are to be dealt with in IMCO opinions for the legal affairs committee. On ADR, IMCO will enjoy exclusive competence. Both the committees agreed to work in close cooperation in order to ensure the consistency of the reports.

**RAPPORTEURS:** Sylvana Rapti (S&D, EL) on Collective Redress  
Robert Rochefort (ALDE, FR) on ADR  
[ADR website](#)

In the follow-up discussion, the committee welcomed the holistic and balanced approach proposed by the rapporteur. Interventions by Members focused on the social aspects of the retail market, sustainable consumption, innovation and market access of consumers in rural areas.

**RAPPORTEUR:** Anna Maria Corazza Bildt (EPP, SV) - [Dossier](#)

**SHADOW RAPPORTEURS:** P.A. Panzeri (S&D), M. Løkkegaard (ALDE), M. Harbour (ECR), H. Rühle (Greens/EFA), K. Triantaphyllides (GUE/NGL); M. Salvini (EFD).

**PLENARY VOTE:** 23 June 2011

In parallel it also supports the re-evaluation of current rules in order to reflect evolving needs.

The text underlines that 112 can be a life saving number which increases the protection of citizens. Thus the accessibility, the quality and the efficiency of this service, as well as the accuracy and reliability of caller location information would need to be improved. It is also necessary to raise public awareness of this service.



## Safer and greener scooters and motorcycles

On 24 May, members will consider a draft legislative report on the approval and market surveillance of mopeds and motorcycles and on-road quads and mini-cars. The main objectives of the proposed regulation are: simplify the legal framework, reduce the level of emissions and increase safety.

The rapporteur proposes to clarify the scope of the regulation by introducing new subcategories for special vehicles, to rationalise the implementation timing for safety and environmental rules, and ensure information for independent repairers.

**RAPPORTEUR:** Wim van de Camp (EPP, NL) - [Subject file](#) & [Slideshow](#)

In the context of the structured dialogue with the Commission, Members of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection will exchange views on the Legislative and Work Programme 2011-2012 with Vice-President Viviane Reding, responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights & Citizenship (25 May 9.00-10.00), Commissioner Algirdas Šemeta, responsible for Taxation and Customs Union, Audit & Anti-Fraud (25 May 15.15-16.00), Commissioner John Dalli, responsible for Health & Consumer Policy (25 May 9.30-10.30) and Vice-President Neelie Kroes, responsible for the Digital Agenda (26 May 11.30-12.30).

Mrs Reding [web-site](#)

Mr Šemeta [web-site](#)

Mr Dalli [web-site](#)

Mrs Kroes [web-site](#)

## New rules for mortgages

On 24 May members will hold an exchange of views on a proposal for a Directive on credit agreements relating to residential property (mortgages) which will be addressed by IMCO and ECON. The objective is to help consumers regain confidence in the financial system by giving borrowers a higher level of protection through new rules on advertising, pre-contractual information, advice, a creditworthiness assessment and early repayment. The proposal also aims to promote the cross-border activity of creditors and intermediaries, and create a level playing field for all actors involved.

**RAPPORTEUR:** Kurt Lechner (EPP, DE)

Mortgage [web-site](#)

[FAQ](#) on the proposed Directive

## The challenge of net neutrality



Members will receive the presentation of an analytical study which provides background on the debate on network neutrality, including its technological and economic underpinnings, the implications for business models moving forward, and the legal, regulatory, policy and business responses that have been attempted and that are currently in play. It includes a comparison between the US, where these issues have been debated intensely, and the EU.

More precisely, the study describes the technology and the economics of quality differentiation in the internet and the evolving business models related to quality differentiation. The EU/US comparison focuses on the respective broadband markets, on the relevant regulation and on competition law.

[Study](#)

## Opinions votes and debates: application of EU law, energy market, European cinema, subsidiarity ....

The Committee will vote on the draft opinions debated during the last meeting held: the 27th annual report (2009) on monitoring the application of EU law (Busoi), Energy market integrity and transparency (Trzaskowski), European cinema in the digital era (Creutzmann), and Better Legislation, Subsidiarity and proportionality and Smart regulation (de Jong).

A number of draft opinions on issues debated during the previous meeting will also be considered: the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances (Handzlik), technical requirements for credit transfers and direct debits in Euros (Gebhardt) and the modernisation of customs (Salvini).

[Draft opinion](#) dossiers

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

### How to modernise Public procurement rules?

Innovative, sustainable and electronic public procurement will be debated in a hearing with stakeholders and experts in the afternoon of 24 May. The various systems of choice, the way to improve SMEs access to public procurement, together with practical experience and current problems will also be discussed in this hearing related to an IMCO report (Rapp.: H. Rühle).

[Programme](#) - [Poster](#)

### Mutual evaluation process of the Services Directive

On the afternoon of 25 May, the Committee will hold a hearing with Representatives of the Commission, of national ministries and stakeholders on the lessons learned and the perspectives related to the Mutual evaluation process of the Services Directive. A briefing paper related to the report currently under preparation (Rapp.: Handzlik) will also be presented.

[Programme](#) - [Poster](#)

## FROM THE COURT OF JUSTICE

### Services Directive: Member States may not prohibit canvassing by members of a regulated profession



In a judgement handed down on 6 April, the Court of Justice held that the French regulations prohibiting canvassing by qualified accountants are in breach of the Services Directive. According to the Court, canvassing may be regarded as a form of direct marketing and thus falls within the notion of commercial

communication, which cannot be subject to a total prohibition under the Services Directive. A general prohibition on canvassing is at odds with the objective pursued by the Directive on removing restrictions on the free movement of services, as long as forbidding any canvassing by qualified accountants in a Member State could affect professionals from other Member States by depriving them of an effective means of penetrating the national market in question.

[Text of the Judgement](#)

## IMCO IN THE PLENARY

### New rules on textile labelling adopted

On 11 May the Plenary endorsed the overall agreement on a new regulation on textile fibre names and related labelling and the marking of the fibre composition of textile products reached by the IMCO's negotiating team and the Council.

The presence of non-textile parts of animal origin shall be indicated in the labelling or marking of textile products when they are made available on the market.

By 30 September 2013 the Commission shall submit a report and, possibly, legislative proposals, with regard to an origin labelling scheme aimed at providing consumers with accurate information on the country of origin and ensuring full traceability of textile products.

The report shall also examine the added value to the consumer of possible new labelling requirements (i.e. relating to care instructions, size, hazardous substances, flammability and environmental performance, etc).

The Commission shall carry out a study to evaluate whether there is a causal link between allergic reactions and chemical substances or mixtures used in textile products and, if appropriate, submit legislative proposals.



**RAPporteur:** Toine Manders, (ALDE, NL) - [Subject file](#)

**SHADOWS:** L. Comi (EPP), C. Schalderose (S&D), H. Rühle (Greens/EFA), E. McClarkin (ECR), E.B. Svensson (GUE/NGL), M. Salvini (EFD) - [Adopted Text](#)

# LAST COMMITTEE MEETING (11-13 APRIL 2011)

## Modernisation of EU Public procurement policy

On 13 April Members exchanged views on the "Green Paper on the modernisation of EU public procurement policy" in view of the drafting of an own initiative report that will set out strategic priorities for the improvement of the EU rules. The rapporteur stressed the need to use more flexible instruments for rolling out innovative solutions, to move away from the cheapest offer and to focus more on the most economically advantageous tenders.

Members regretted the lack of transparency and stressed the need to reduce bureaucracy, to disseminate best practices and improve SMEs access to public sector contracts.

**RAPPORTEUR:** Heide Rühle (Greens/EFA, DE)

## Hearings on Universal service and on tractors

On 11 April, IMCO held a hearing on "Universal Service and the 112 emergency number in the digital era". Members debated with experts, public authorities and stakeholders on the need of Universal Service obligations, on the role of broadband and on how to improve the 112 emergency number service.



Next day, the committee held a hearing related to the report on the proposal for a regulation on the approval of agricultural or forestry vehicles, which is currently under preparation. The hearing looked at technological evolutions in these vehicles, with a view to ensuring a high level of safety and environmental performance and a proper implementation of the new regulation.

Universal Service: [Presentations, position papers and slideshow](#)

Tractors: [Presentations and position papers](#)

## Votes on several opinions, Consumer Conditions Scoreboard and IMI

On 12 April IMCO adopted a number of opinions: on deposit guarantee schemes (Roithová), with 34 votes in favour and 3 abstentions; on the use of phosphates in household laundry detergents (Tarabella), 32 votes in favour, 3 against and 2 abstentions; on insurance guarantee schemes (Grech), 34 votes in favour and 3 abstentions, on European broadband, unanimity, and Trade policy, 33 votes in favour and 3 abstentions (both Harbour); on the extension of the EU/Andorra

## Twelve levers for re-launching the Single market

Mr Barnier presented to the Committee the 12 key "levers" to revive the Single Market by 2012, accompanied by a cluster of supporting actions. The Commissioner praised the Committee for its efforts in producing a coherent and timely response to the Commission proposal. The Commissioner underlined that it is not possible to exit the economic crisis without a proper functioning Single Market.

Members stressed the need for political leadership and ownership for the re-launch of the Single Market, underlining the importance of social rights and sustainability and stressing the need to make the Single Market more SME-friendly.

Commissioner Barnier [website](#) - [Press release](#) - SMA [web-site](#)

## Preparing the Polish Presidency

In view of the forthcoming Presidency of the EU Council, Mr Pawlak, the Polish Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, paid a visit to the IMCO Chair and Coordinators on 19 April.



In his statement, he stressed the important role of the internal market for overcoming the crisis and referred to a number of the 12 key actions recently proposed in the framework of the Single Market Act: Services Directive, public procurement, e-commerce, mobility of workers, support for SMEs and the European patent.

Members addressed additional issues such as the social dimension of the Single Market, consumer rights, innovation and the future financial framework, on-line trade and mortgages.

[Programme and Slideshow](#) of the IMCO delegation to Poland (17-19 May 2011)

# TIP OF THE MONTH

## Improve your financial literacy



Financially capable consumers can make better use of the opportunities created by financial integration in the EU.

Since 2007, a tool which aims to disseminate information on the wide range

of financial education programmes existing across the EU has been available: the European Database for Financial Education (EDFE). In EDFE it is possible to search for a financial education scheme according to specific criteria or sign in as a scheme provider in order to add new projects to the database. In the current list, the schemes are categorised on a geographical basis, content areas, target audience, method of delivery, the instruments used, and the contact details of the providers.

Financial education [Website](#)

# JOIN THE "FRIENDS OF IMCO" NETWORK....

## Closer and closer to 1,500 subscribers! Who's going to win the lunch with the Chair?

The "Friends of IMCO" Network is expanding quickly: the number of subscribers has now reached more than 1,450 people representing stakeholders, EP members, officials and assistants, as well as representatives of international, national and local public bodies and other EU institutions.

The target of 1,500 is approaching: join the Network and maybe you'll be the lucky one who will have a lunch with the IMCO Chair, Malcolm Harbour. Send now an e-mail with your contact details and "Newsletter" in the subject field to [imco-secretariat@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:imco-secretariat@europarl.europa.eu)

**Closure date of the current issue: 20 May 2011**

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