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- Calls on the Commission to come up with a legislative proposal to remove obstacles encountered by mobile workers in order to ensure the full portability of pension rights;

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70. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

Single market for enterprises and growth

P7_TA(2011)0146

European Parliament resolution of 6 April 2011 on a Single Market for Enterprises and Growth (2010/2277(INI))

(2012/C 296 E/10)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission Communication ‘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 20 May 2010 on delivering a Single Market to consumers and citizens ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to Professor Mario Monti’s report of 9 May 2010 ‘A new Strategy for the Single Market’,
- having regard to the Commission Communication ‘Europe 2020 – a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ (COM(2010)2020),
- having regard to the Commission Communication ‘Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative. Innovation Union’ (COM(2010)0546),
- having regard to the Commission Communication ‘Smart Regulation in the European Union’ (COM(2010)0543),
- having regard to the Commission Communication ‘Digital Agenda for Europe’ (COM(2010)0245),
- having regard to the Report ‘Evaluation of SMEs’ access to public procurement markets in the EU’ ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to the Commission Communication ‘Cross-border business-to-consumer e-commerce in the EU’ (COM(2009)0557),
- having regard to the Commission Recommendation of 29 June 2009 on measures to improve the functioning of the single market ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to the Commission Communication ‘Public procurement for a better environment’ (COM(2008)0400),

⁽¹⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0186.

⁽²⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/business-environment/files/smes_access_to_public_procurement_final_report_2010_en.pdf

⁽³⁾ OJ L 176, 7.7.2009, p. 17.

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- having regard to the Commission Communication ‘Think Small First – A ‘Small Business Act’ for Europe (COM(2008)0394),
 - having regard to the Commission Communication ‘A single market for 21st century Europe’ (COM(2007)0724) and the accompanying Commission staff working document ‘The Single Market: review of achievements’ (SEC(2007)1521),
 - having regard to the Commission Communication ‘Opportunities, access and solidarity: towards a new social vision for 21st century Europe’ (COM(2007)0726),
 - having regard to the Commission Interpretative Communication on the application of Community law on Public Procurement and Concessions to Institutionalised Public-Private Partnerships (IPPP), C(2007)6661,
 - having regard to the Commission Communication ‘Time to move up a gear. The new partnership for growth and jobs’ (COM(2006)0030),
 - having regard to the Council Conclusions on the Single Market Act (SMA) of 10 December 2010,
 - having regard to its resolution of 21 September 2010 on completing the internal market for e-commerce ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 18 May 2010 on new developments in public procurement ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 9 March 2010 on the Internal Market Scoreboard ⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 3 February 2009 on pre-commercial procurement: driving innovation to ensure sustainable high-quality public services in Europe ⁽⁴⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 30 November 2006 on time to move up a gear – creating a Europe of entrepreneurship and growth ⁽⁵⁾,
 - having regard to the Commission Green Paper on the modernisation of EU public procurement policy (COM(2011)0015),
 - 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 International Trade, the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, the Committee on Regional Development and the Committee on Legal Affairs (A7-0071/2011),
- A. whereas a single market based on free and fair competition is the EU’s crucial economic reform goal and represents a key competitive advantage for Europe in the global economy,
- B. whereas one of the great advantages of the internal market has been the removal of barriers to mobility and the harmonisation of institutional regulations, fostering cultural understanding, integration, economic growth and European solidarity,

⁽¹⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0320.

⁽²⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0173.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 349 E, 22.10.2010, p. 25.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 67 E, 18.3.2010, p. 10.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 316 E, 22.12.2006, p. 378.

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- C. whereas it is important to increase confidence in the Single Market at all levels and to eliminate existing barriers to enterprises entering business; whereas high administrative burdens discourage new entrepreneurs,
- D. whereas it is important that the Single Market Act does not consist of a series of measures isolated from each other, and that all proposals combine to contribute to the achievement of a coherent objective,
- E. whereas all enterprises are affected by market fragmentation, but SMEs are particularly vulnerable to the problems stemming from it,
- F. whereas the Single Market is often perceived to have mostly benefited large enterprises so far, despite SMEs being the EU's growth engine,
- G. whereas lack of innovation in the EU is a key factor for the low growth rates in recent years; whereas green technology innovation provides an opportunity to reconcile long-term growth and environmental protection,
- H. whereas, in order to achieve the EU 2020 strategy goals, the Single Market must provide the conditions for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth; whereas the Single Market should become a better environment for innovation and research by EU enterprises,
- I. whereas competition policy is an essential tool in ensuring that the EU has a dynamic, efficient and innovative internal market and is competitive on the global stage,
- J. whereas venture capital is an important source of finance for new innovative businesses; whereas there are barriers for venture capital funds wanting to invest in different EU Member States,
- K. whereas developing ICT and its broader use by EU enterprises are essential for our future growth,
- L. whereas e-commerce and e-services, including e-Government and e-Health services, are still underdeveloped at EU level,
- M. whereas the postal sector and the promotion of interoperability and cooperation among postal systems and services can have a significant impact on the development of cross-border e-commerce,
- N. whereas there are regulatory barriers to the efficient licensing of copyrights that lead to a high level of fragmentation of the market for audiovisual products, which is detrimental to EU businesses; whereas both businesses and consumers would benefit from the creation of a genuine Single Market for audiovisual products and services, respecting the fundamental rights of internet users,
- O. whereas counterfeiting and piracy reduce business confidence in e-commerce and fuel the fragmentation of intellectual property protection rules which stifles innovation in the Single Market,
- P. whereas differences in fiscal provisions may result in significant obstacles to cross-border transactions; whereas the coordination of national tax policies, as proposed by Mario Monti in his report, would bring substantial added value to enterprises and citizens,

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- Q. whereas public procurement plays an important role in boosting economic growth, accounting for around 17 % of the EU's GDP; whereas cross-border procurement accounts for a low share of the whole public procurement market, despite being an opportunity for EU firms; whereas SMEs still have limited access to public procurement markets,
- R. whereas services are a crucial sector for economic growth and employment, but the Single Market for services is still underdeveloped, particularly due to gaps and difficulties encountered by the Member States with respect to the implementation of the Services Directive,

Introduction

1. Welcomes the Commission Communication 'Towards a Single Market Act'; considers that the three chapters of the Communication are equally important and interconnected, and should be dealt with in a consistent approach without isolating the different issues at stake from each other;
2. Emphasises, in particular, the Commission's commitment, in this Communication, to promoting new approaches towards sustainable development,
3. Urges the Commission to conduct a financial audit of the EU's budget priorities for the next financial framework and to prioritise European added value projects able to enhance EU competitiveness and integration in the areas of research, knowledge and innovation;
4. Stresses, particularly in view of the economic and financial crisis, the importance of the Single Market for the competitiveness of EU enterprises and for the growth and stability of European economies, calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure sufficient resources to improve the implementation of the single market rules, and welcomes the holistic approach used in the Communication; emphasises the complementary nature of the various measures contained in the Monti report, the coherence of which is not fully reflected in the SMA;
5. Calls on the Commission, therefore, to submit an ambitious package of measures supported by a clear and coherent strategy to promote the competitiveness of the internal market; calls on the Commission to reconnect with the spirit of Mario Monti's report, which advocated promoting liberalisation and competition as well as improving fiscal and social convergence;
6. Underlines the importance of improving the European Union's economic governance in order to create the economic conditions for enterprises to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the Single Market allowing them to grow and become more competitive, and calls for this linkage to be made explicit in the Single Market Act; calls on the Commission to pay close attention to the impact on the Single Market's internal cohesion of the growing economic divergence between the EU Member States;
7. Emphasises the need to adopt an ambitious European industrial policy with the objective of strengthening the real economy and of achieving the transition to a more intelligent and sustainable one;
8. Stresses that the external dimension of the European strategy, which also includes international trade, is assuming growing importance owing to the integration of markets and, therefore, that an appropriate external strategy can be genuinely useful with a view to sustainable growth, employment and a stronger single market for businesses, in line with the aims of the EU 2020 Strategy; stresses the need to transform the EU's trade policy into a true vehicle for sustainable development and the creation of more and better jobs; asks the Commission to develop a trade policy consistent with a strong, job-creating industrial policy;

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9. Observes that European Union policies on the Single Market and regional development are highly complementary and stresses that the progress of the internal market and further development of the Union's regions are interdependent, leading to a Europe marked by cohesion and competitiveness; welcomes the Commission's proposals aimed at deepening the single market; stresses that real and effective single market accessibility for all EU regions is a prerequisite for the free movement of people, goods, capital and services, and thus for a strong and dynamic Single Market; points out, in this connection, the essential role played by the Union's regional policy in terms of developing infrastructure and with regard to economically and socially coherent and balanced development of regions;

General Assessment

An innovative Single Market

10. Calls on the Commission to adopt a consistent and balanced strategy in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders, with a view to fostering innovation and also supporting innovative business, as the best way to reward creation, and protecting fundamental rights, such as the right to privacy and the protection of personal data;

11. Strongly supports the creation of an SME-friendly EU-wide patent and of a unified patent litigation system in order to make the Single Market a leader in innovation and boost European competitiveness; stresses that the translation of patents into many languages is an additional cost burden that would hinder innovation within the Single Market and that a compromise on language aspects should be reached as soon as possible;

12. Supports the creation of EU project bonds in order to support long-term innovation and job creation in the Single Market and to finance the implementation of major cross-border infrastructure projects, particularly in the areas of energy, transport and telecommunications, supporting the ecological transformation of our economies; stresses the need for appropriate risk management structures and for full disclosure of all potential liabilities;

13. Points out the importance of a fully operational internal market for energy in order to achieve increased autonomy in energy supply; considers that this could be achieved through a regional clustering approach, as well as through the diversification of energy routes and sources; underlines that Eastern European infrastructure should be enhanced to bring it into line with that of Western Member States; stresses that the internal energy market should contribute to maintaining energy prices affordable for both consumers and businesses; believes that, in order to achieve the EU's climate and energy objectives, a new approach is necessary in terms of applying adequate minimum duty rates on CO₂ emissions and on energy content; highlights the need for further energy efficiency plans and measures to significantly increase energy savings; stresses the need to promote smart grids as well as renewable energies and to encourage local and regional authorities to exploit ICTs in their energy efficiency plans; calls for the Commission to closely monitor the implementation of the directives on energy-labelling, eco-design, transports, buildings and infrastructures, in order to ensure and implement a common European framework approach;

14. Supports the initiative on the environmental footprint of products, and urges the Commission to quickly propose the establishment of a real common assessment and labelling system;

15. Calls on the Commission to promote cross-border investment and to set up a framework to encourage venture capital funds to be invested effectively within the Single Market, to protect investors and to provide incentives for these funds to be invested in sustainable projects in order to achieve the ambitious objectives of the EU 2020 Strategy; invites the Commission to look into the possibilities of creating a European venture capital fund capable of investing in early-stage 'proof of concept' and business development prior to commercial investment; asks the Commission to carry out an annual assessment of public and private investment needs and how they are being, or should be, met within its proposals;

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16. Acknowledges the importance of public procurement, especially pre-commercial procurement, and the role it plays in stimulating innovation in the Single Market; encourages Member States to make use of pre-commercial procurement to give a decisive initial push to new markets for innovative and green technologies while improving the quality and effectiveness of public services; calls on the Commission and Member States to better communicate the existing possibilities for pre-commercial procurement to public authorities; calls on the Commission to explore how cross-border joint procurement can be facilitated;

17. Urges Member States to increase efforts to pool innovation resources through the creation of innovation clusters and steps to encourage the participation of SMEs in EU research programmes; stresses the need for dissemination and cross-border exploitation of the results of scientific research and innovation;

A digital Single Market

18. Welcomes the Commission's proposed revision of the e-Signatures Directive with a view to providing a legal framework for cross-border recognition and interoperability of secure e-authentication systems; emphasises the need for mutual recognition of e-identification and e-authentication across the EU and asks the Commission, in this regard, to tackle in particular problems relating to discrimination against recipients of services on grounds of nationality or place of residence;

19. Considers that the White Paper on transport policy should focus on proposals to enhance sustainable transport modes, including intermodality; stresses the importance of the proposed e-mobility package aimed at using new technologies to support an efficient and sustainable transport system, especially through the use of integrated ticketing; calls on Member States to swiftly implement the directive on intelligent transport systems;

20. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take the appropriate measures to enhance the confidence of businesses and citizens in e-commerce, namely by guaranteeing high-level consumer protection in this field; emphasises that this could be achieved after a thorough evaluation of the Consumer Rights Directive and a thorough impact assessment of all the policy options in the Green paper on European Contract Law; points out that simplifying registration of domains across borders for online businesses, as well as improving secure online payment systems and facilitating cross-border debt recovery, would equally constitute useful measures to promote e-commerce across the EU;

21. Stresses the imperative need to adapt EU Information and Communication Technology (ICT) standardisation policy to market and policy developments, with a view to achieving European policy goals requiring interoperability;

22. Stresses the need to go beyond the existing barriers to cross-border e-commerce in the EU; emphasises the need for an active policy enabling the public and companies to benefit fully from this tool available to them, which can offer them quality products and services at competitive prices; believes that this is essential in the present climate of economic crisis, and that it would aid enormously in the completion of the Single Market, as a means of fighting rising inequality and protecting consumers who are vulnerable, live in remote locations or suffer from reduced mobility, as well as low-income groups and SMEs, to which integration into the world of e-commerce is particularly important;

23. Underscores the potential for the EU's regions to play a considerable role in assisting the Commission's drive to create a digital Single Market; highlights, in this regard, the importance that should be placed on utilising the funds available to the EU's regions in order to overcome their lack of development in the fields of e-commerce and e-services, which could serve as a fruitful source of future growth in the regions;

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24. Considers that SMEs should be empowered to make extensive use of e-commerce in Europe; deplores the fact that the Commission will not be coming out with a proposal for a European system for the settlement of online disputes for digital transactions until 2012, twelve years after Parliament called for such an initiative in September 2000 ⁽¹⁾;

25. Urges the Member States to fully implement the Third Postal Services Directive (2008/6/EC); stresses the need to guarantee universal access to high-quality postal services, avoid social dumping and promote interoperability and cooperation among postal systems and services, in order to facilitate efficient distribution and tracking of online purchases, which will boost consumer confidence as regards cross-border purchases;

26. Stresses the need to create a Single Market for online audiovisual goods by promoting open ICT standards and to support innovation and creativity through efficient management of copyright, including the creation of a pan-European licensing system, with the aim of guaranteeing broader and fairer access to cultural goods and services for citizens and ensuring that rightholders receive adequate remuneration for their creative works and that the fundamental rights of internet users are respected; stresses the need to align online legislation on intellectual property rights with existing off-line legislation on intellectual property rights, especially on trademarks, so that consumers and businesses place more trust in e-commerce;

27. Points out the need to strengthen the fight against online piracy to protect the rights of creators, while respecting the fundamental rights of consumers; points out that bodies and citizens must be properly informed about the consequences of counterfeiting and piracy; welcomes the initiative announced by the Commission aimed at combating trade mark and product piracy, and in particular the legislative proposals due for submission in 2011 seeking to adjust the legal framework to the new challenges of the internet and to strengthen measures by the customs authorities in this area; notes that in this connection synergies could also be achieved with the forthcoming action plan to enhance European market surveillance;

28. Underlines also that the protection and enforcement of IPRs should be developed as part of a broader approach, taking into consideration the rights and needs of consumers and EU citizens, but which does not conflict with other internal and external EU policies such as promoting the information society, fostering education, health care and development in third countries and promoting biological and cultural diversity on an international scale;

A business-friendly Single Market

29. Emphasises the need for effective implementation and completion of the financial supervisory package to achieve a sustainable internal market; calls for an assessment by the Commission to ensure that such implementation is undertaken throughout the EU and a correlation table published in a yearly basis; to that end, considers that best practices should be promoted amongst national and EU supervisory entities;

30. Calls on the Commission to improve SMEs' access to capital markets by streamlining information available on different EU financing opportunities such as those provided by the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme, the European Investment Bank or the European Investment Fund and by making funding procedures easier, quicker and less bureaucratic; to that end recommends a much more holistic approach to the award of funding, in particular in view of supporting the transition towards a more sustainable economy;

31. Believes that the pluralistic structure of the European banking market meets best the variety of financing needs of SMEs and that the diversity of legal models and business objectives improves access to finance;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 146, 17.5.2001, p. 101.

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32. Highlights the economic importance of SMEs and micro-enterprises in the European economy; insists, therefore, on the need to ensure that the 'think small first' principle promoted by the 'Small Business Act' is well implemented and supports the Commission's measures aimed at removing the unnecessary administrative burdens on SMEs; suggests that SMEs with a specific growth potential, high wages and good working conditions should be supported and calls for a differentiation within the Small Business Act in order to bring it into line with Europe 2020;
33. Draws attention to the importance of local businesses for social ties, employment and dynamism in disadvantaged areas, particularly urban districts facing difficulties or sparsely populated areas; calls for them to receive appropriate support under the Union's regional policy;
34. Underlines the necessity of strengthening SMEs capabilities when it comes to project designing and proposal writing, including technical assistance and suitable education programmes;
35. Calls for the adoption of a Statute for a European Private Company to facilitate the establishment and cross-border operation of small and medium-sized enterprises in the Single Market;
36. Believes that the equity investors will be more encouraged to finance small and micro businesses in their start-up phase if more efficient exit routes are provided through national or pan-European growth stock markets that at present do not function adequately;
37. Urges all Member States to fully implement the Goods Package;
38. Points out the importance of interconnected business registers and calls on the Commission to develop a clear legal framework ensuring that information in such business registers is complete and correct;
39. Recognises the important contribution to growth and job generation of the retail sector; calls on the Commission to include within the Single Market Act a proposal for a European retail Action Plan that identifies and addresses the numerous challenges faced by retailers and suppliers within the Single Market; considers that the Action Plan should be based on the conclusions of the work underway in Parliament on 'a more efficient and fairer retail market';
40. Underlines the importance of removing unnecessary fiscal, administrative and legal barriers to cross-border activities; considers that a clearer VAT framework and reporting obligations for businesses are needed to encourage sustainable production and consumption patterns, limit adaptation costs, combat VAT fraud and enhance the competitiveness of EU firms;
41. Welcomes the Commission's intention to publish a Green Paper on corporate governance and to launch a public consultation on the information on social, environmental and human rights aspects of investment by businesses; urges the Commission to come up with concrete proposals on private investments in order to create efficient incentives for long-term, sustainable and ethic investments, to better coordinate corporate fiscal policies and to encourage corporate responsibility;
42. Welcomes the review of the Energy Tax Directive, with a view to better reflecting climate change objectives, provided that the tax burden does not fall unduly on vulnerable consumers;
43. Warmly welcomes the Commission's initiative for a Directive introducing a common consolidated corporate tax base and stresses that this could reduce tax avoidance and evasion and increase the transparency and comparability of corporate tax rates, thus reducing the obstacles to cross-border activities;

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44. Calls on the Commission to make public procurement procedures more effective and less bureaucratic in order to encourage EU firms to participate in cross-border public procurement; stresses that further simplification is needed especially for local and regional authorities and to allow SMEs greater access to public procurement; urges the Commission to provide data regarding the level of openness of public procurement and to ensure reciprocity with other industrialised countries and major emerging economies; invites the Commission to look into new ways of improving the access for European enterprises to public procurement markets outside the EU, in order to ensure a level playing field for both European and foreign enterprises competing for the award of public contracts;

45. Proposes, in more general terms, that future trade agreements negotiated by the Union should incorporate a chapter on sustainable development, drawing on the principles of CSR as defined by the 2010 update of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises;

46. Calls on the Commission to develop greater coordination between SME-related measures at domestic and international level, and to identify and promote SMEs that have trade potential; takes the view that the Member States should do more to encourage SMEs to make use of existing initiatives and tools such as the market access database and the export helpdesk;

47. Takes the view that the Commission should improve its efforts to facilitate cross-border banking, by removing all existing obstacles to the use of competing clearing and settlement systems and by applying common rules to trading;

48. Considers that the Commission should sponsor a European skills exchange whereby small and medium-sized enterprises can benefit from the skills available in larger enterprises, thereby promoting synergies and mentoring;

49. Calls for Commission proposals to revise the Accounting Directives in order to avoid costly and inefficient over-regulation, in particular for SMEs, so that their competitiveness and growth potential can be exploited more effectively;

A Single Market for services

50. Stresses the need for full and proper implementation of the Services Directive, including the setting up of fully operational Points of Single Contact allowing for online completion of procedures and formalities, which can considerably reduce operational costs for enterprises and boost the Single Market for services; calls on the Commission and Member States to work together and take further steps in the development of the Single Market for services on the basis of the mutual evaluation process; urges the Commission to place special emphasis on the development of the Single Market for online services;

51. Calls on the Commission to encourage the development of the business services sector and to take the necessary regulatory measures in order to protect businesses, especially SMEs, from unfair commercial practices by larger enterprises in the supply chain; invites the Commission to define 'manifestly unfair commercial practices' in the supply chain, in consultation with the stakeholders, and to propose further action to prevent unfair commercial practices in respect of competition and freedom of contract; recalls its resolution of 16 December 2008 on misleading directory companies ⁽¹⁾ and urges the Commission again to come up with a proposal to prevent the fraudulent practices of misleading business directories;

52. Considers that any legislative proposal on services concessions should provide a legal framework that would ensure transparency, effective judicial protection for both economic operators and contracting authorities across the EU; asks the Commission, before proposing any legislation, to provide evidence that the general principles laid down in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (non-discrimination, principle of equal treatment and transparency) are not satisfactorily applied to services concessions in practice;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 45 E, 23.2.2010, p. 17.

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53. Welcomes the Commission's intention to propose a legislative reform of the standardisation framework, also covering services; stresses that the standardisation of services should lead to the completion of the single market where this has been shown to be worthwhile, and in particular must take full account of the needs of SMEs; recognises the role of product standards for the functioning of the European internal market and regards standards as a key tool for promoting sustainable and high-quality goods and services for consumer and enterprises; calls for measures promoting transparency, cost reduction and improved involvement of stakeholders;

54. Emphasises, in the interests of boosting regional competitiveness, the importance of 'smart specialisation' of regions; considers that the EU single market can only flourish as a whole when all actors and all regions – including SMEs in all sectors, including the public sector, the social economy and citizens themselves – are involved; considers also that not only a few high-tech areas, but all the regions of Europe and every Member State must be involved, each focusing on its own strengths ('smart specialisation') within Europe;

55. Highlights the importance of the external dimension of the internal market and, in particular, of regulatory cooperation with main trading partners, whether at bilateral or multilateral levels, with the objective of promoting regulatory convergence, equivalence of third-country regimes and the wider adoption of international standards; encourages the Commission to examine the existing agreements with third parties that extend elements of the internal market beyond its borders as to their effectiveness in providing legal certainty for its potential beneficiaries;

Key Priorities

Creating an EU Patent and a unified litigation system

56. Stresses that the creation of the EU Patent and of a unified litigation system, as well as an improved system for the management of copyright, is indispensable for supporting innovation and creativity within the Single Market (SMA proposals 1 and 2);

Financing innovation

57. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take due account of the importance of innovation for strong and more sustainable growth and job creation by ensuring that innovation is properly financed, in particular through the creation of EU project bonds, especially in the areas of energy, transport and telecommunications, supporting the ecological transformation of our economies, and through a legislative framework to encourage venture capital funds to invest effectively throughout the EU; stresses that incentives should be provided for long-term investment in innovative and job-creating sectors (SMA proposals 15 and 16);

Stimulating e-commerce

58. Urges the Commission to take all the necessary steps to enhance the confidence of businesses and consumers in e-commerce and stimulate its development in the Single Market; stresses that an EU Action Plan against counterfeiting and piracy as well as a framework directive on the management of copyrights are crucial to reach this objective (SMA proposals 2, 3 and 5);

Improving SMEs participation in the Single Market

59. Highlights that further action is needed to make the Single Market a better environment for SMEs; considers that such action should include improving their access to capital markets, removing administrative and fiscal barriers to their cross-border activities by adopting a clearer VAT framework and a common consolidated corporate tax base, as well as the revision of the public procurement framework, to make procedures more flexible and less bureaucratic (SMA proposals 12, 17, 19 and 20);

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Rationalising public procurement procedures

60. Asks the Commission to review the legislation relating to public procurement and public and private partnership with a view to fostering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth within the Single Market and to stimulating cross-border public procurement; stresses the need for a clearer framework, providing legal certainty for both economic operators and contracting authorities; strongly encourages Member States to use pre-commercial public procurement in order to stimulate the market for innovative and green technologies; insists on the need to ensure reciprocity with industrialised countries and major emerging economies in the field of public procurement (SMA proposal 17 and 24);

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61. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.
