



2018/2046(BUD)

12.7.2018

OPINION

of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

for the Committee on Budgets

on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2019
(2018/2046(BUD))

Rapporteur for opinion: Jasenko Selimovic

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes that the responsibility of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) in the budget procedure covers budget lines in titles 2 (Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs), 14 (Taxation and customs union) and 33 (Justice and Consumers);
2. Underlines that the Single Market is one of Europe's greatest achievement, which has allowed persons, goods, services and capital to move more freely in the Union, has boosted the EU Gross Domestic Product by 1,7 % and has created 3,6 million additional jobs since 1990, and therefore considers that the completion of the Single Market must remain one of the priorities in the 2019 Budget, since it is crucial to making the Union a more competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy, to the benefit of both its citizens and its businesses; stresses, in this connection, the need to make the Union more competitive and calls for a budget allocation to help transform activities for a digital world;
3. Recalls that a healthy and empowered consumer environment is a key factor for the completion of the Single Market and for economic growth throughout Europe and highlights that Union legislation on consumer protection has given to citizens and businesses the predictability and legal certainty that is necessary in many areas such as passenger rights, consumer rights and the fight against unfair commercial practices and unfair contract terms;
4. Notes at the same time that unsafe and non-compliant products are still a reality on Union markets, as highlighted by a number of recent scandals, thereby underlining the need to earmark funding for more efficient and coordinated market supervision and measures to ensure consumer safety;
5. Welcomes the fact that, in the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2019 (draft budget 2019), IMCO's main priorities in the areas of functioning of the customs union, consumer protection, competitiveness and internal market for goods and services have been taken into account appropriately and endowed with adequate budgetary allocations in terms of commitment appropriations, and invites the Council to confirm those appropriations;
6. Stresses that Single Market policy should be a priority as part of the push for better budget spending, and that equivalent savings should be found in other areas to meet spending commitments;
7. Welcomes the increased level of commitment appropriations for the modernisation of the customs union in support of the implementation of the Union Customs Code (Code) and of the development of the electronic customs systems, since the full and uniform implementation of the Code is essential to better protect the citizens and the financial interests of the Union and e-customs constitutes the major challenge over the coming

years in ensuring a better functioning of the internal market; and underlines that the simplification of customs procedures and effective enforcement of customs systems are essential to combat fraud and drive competition;

8. Stresses that challenges in the consumer protection of Union citizens still remain, in particular as regards the digital economy and the development of cross-border retail trade in the Union and consequently regrets that the appropriations for the Consumer Programme in the draft budget 2019 are not sufficient; calls, therefore, for adequate funding for the consumers programme in order to finalise the implementation of a genuine European digital single market, to ensure a high level of protection for consumers, in particular vulnerable consumers, and ensure that new challenges to consumer protection policies are suitably addressed;
9. Stresses the importance of internal market governance tools in ensuring not only proper application of Union rules but also better information and assistance for consumers and businesses and recommends that the Commission support awareness programmes regarding their rights and appropriate action in response to infringements thereof; calls, therefore, for an increase in the relevant budget line 02 03 04 in order to ensure better functioning of the Single Market and specifically information and assistance services;
10. Notes that 91,6 % of citizens and businesses are unaware of any European-level information or assistance service¹ and is of the opinion that consumer and businesses awareness of the information and assistance tools, in particular Your Europe portal and European Consumer Centres Network, is of paramount importance and that a significant effort is needed to increase awareness and therefore expects an important increase of funding allocations;
11. Notes that the Union's institutions have already reached an informal agreement on the Commission's proposal for a Regulation on establishing a single digital gateway to provide information, procedures, assistance and problem solving services and expects adequate funding allocations already in 2019 for the preparation of the gateway;
12. Reminds the Commission, in the context of the entry into application on 3 December 2018 of the Regulation (EU) 2018/302 of the European Parliament and of the Council², of its commitment to perform, by March 2020, a substantive analysis of the feasibility of extending the scope of this Regulation to fully cover copyright-protected electronically supplied services, including audio-visual services, and therefore calls for adequate funding allocation for that purpose already in 2019;
13. Recalls that the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME) is a crucial tool for encouraging an entrepreneurial culture, supporting existing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and ensuring

¹ 2017 data taken from Study on information and assistance needs of businesses operating cross-border within the EU, including gap and cost analysis p.30.

² Regulation (EU) 2018/302 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 February 2018 on addressing unjustified geo-blocking and other forms of discrimination based on customers' nationality, place of residence or place of establishment within the internal market and amending Regulations (EC) No 2006/2004 and (EU) 2017/2394 and Directive 2009/22/EC (OJ L 60 I/1, 2.3.2018, p. 1).

their competitiveness, sustainability and growth, helping them embrace digital transformation, as well as promoting the advancement of the knowledge society, and expects that the reduction on payment appropriations for COSME in the draft budget 2019 is only due to a detailed calculation of outstanding amounts by the Commission, since it is of capital importance to avoid bottlenecks and shortages in the payment of COSME actions;

14. Welcomes the increase in commitment appropriations in the draft budget 2019 on the budget line 02 02 01 'Promoting entrepreneurship and improving the competitiveness and access to markets of Union enterprises' while maintains concerns on the level of programmed payment appropriations, since improving SMEs' access to finance remains a key priority for IMCO in the 2019 Budget;
15. Welcomes the increase in appropriations in the 2019 draft budget line 33 04 01 'Safeguarding consumers' interest and improving their safety and information'; stresses that improving average consumer education and awareness is of paramount importance in the digital single market; calls for the reinforcement of Single Market tools that increase awareness of internal market rules; underlines the continuation of financial allocations for SOLVIT, the European Consumer Centres Network and Fin-Net;
16. Highlights the importance of standards for Union market competitiveness; recalls that adequate financial support is necessary for the activities of European Standard Organisations;
17. Asks for the financing of all the pilot projects endorsed by IMCO and in particular the ones on "Monitoring of possible unfair consumer profiling and price adjustment by airlines" (that investigates whether airlines practise the so-called "consumer profiling" in order to adjust the flight fares), on "Application of web accessibility requirements in web-authoring tools and platforms by default" (that encourages and supports the adoption of the relevant accessibility requirements of the European Standard EN 301 549 v1.1.2 by awarding grants to firms), and on "Assessing alleged differences in the quality of products sold on the Single Market" (that develops further relevant consumer and market-related research on alleged dual quality of products on the Single Market).
18. In regard to the pilot project on "Assessing alleged differences in the quality of products sold on the Single Market", calls on the Commission to ascertain that Members of IMCO are closely involved in the planning and oversight of all activities related to that pilot project and reiterates that the role of Members should be prominent in informing the general public about the results of the final report;
19. Stresses the need to link all Internal Market programmes to Regulation (EU) No 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹;

¹ Regulation (EU) No 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	12.7.2018
Result of final vote	+: 34 -: 3 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	John Stuart Agnew, Pascal Arimont, Dita Charanzová, Carlos Coelho, Sergio Gaetano Cofferati, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Daniel Dalton, Nicola Danti, Dennis de Jong, Pascal Durand, Maria Grapini, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Eva Maydell, Marlene Mizzi, Jiří Pospíšil, Christel Schaldemose, Andreas Schwab, Olga Sehnalová, Jasenko Selimovic, Ivan Štefanec, Catherine Stihler, Richard Sulík, Róza Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein, Mylène Troszczynski, Mihai Țurcanu, Anneleen Van Bossuyt, Marco Zullo
Substitutes present for the final vote	Biljana Borzan, Birgit Collin-Langen, Julia Reda, Marc Tarabella, Matthijs van Miltenburg, Sabine Verheyen
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Asim Ademov, Isabella De Monte, Sylvie Goddyn, Nosheena Mobarik

on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) (OJ L 119 4.5.2016, p. 1).

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

34	+
ALDE	Dita Charanzová, Jasenko Selimovic, Matthijs van Miltenburg
ECR	Daniel Dalton, Nosheena Mobarik, Richard Sulík, Anneleen Van Bossuyt
EFDD	Marco Zullo
GUE/NGL	Dennis de Jong
PPE	Asim Ademov, Pascal Arimont, Carlos Coelho, Birgit Collin-Langen, Anna Maria Corazza-Bildt, Eva Maydell, Jiří Pospíšil, Andreas Schwab, Ivan Stefanec, Róza Gräfin von Thun und Hoheinstein, Mihai Turcanu, Sabine Verheyen
S&D	Biljana Borzan, Sergio Gaetano Cofferati, Nicola Danti, Isabella De Monte, Maria Grapini, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Marlene Mizzi, Christel Schaldemose, Olga Sehnalová, Catherine Stihler, Marc Tarabella
Verts/ALE	Pascal Durand, Julia Reda

3	-
EFDD	John Stuart Agnew
Verts/ALE	Sylvie Goddyn, Mylène Troszczynski

0	0

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention