



# **Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption**



***European Economic and Social Committee***

## Did you know that?

- The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is a consultative body set up by the Rome Treaties in 1957; it represents the various economic and social components of organised civil society at European level. The 353 members which make up the Committee hail from the 28 Member States of the European Union (EU) and are divided into three groups: "Employers", "Employees" and "Various Interests".
- The EESC is made up of six sections and a consultative commission, all of which specialise in different subjects; it is here that the Committee's opinions are drawn up. In this way, the EESC is able to share civil society's expertise with the European Commission, European Parliament and Council of the European Union.
- The Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption (INT) is responsible for drafting the EESC's opinions on matters relating to the smooth operation and completion of the single market: industrial policy, intellectual property, financial services, small and medium-sized enterprises, the social economy, the professions, consumer protection, research and innovation, company law, tourism, etc.
- Every year, the INT section draws up around 50 opinions, including own-initiative opinions and exploratory opinions.



**Martin Siecker**  
*President of the INT section*



## Consumer protection

European consumers still face obstacles that prevent them from benefiting fully from the advantages of the Single Market. The protection of consumer rights is one of the priorities of the INT section, which does its utmost to improve these rights within a “border-free” market. The Committee has played a key role here in particular, adopting a stance on the European “Consumer Rights” directive, on the “European Sales Law” directive and more recently on the proposal for a “Product Safety” regulation. The Committee was also one of the first institutions to issue its views on the implementation of collective actions for consumers’ rights.



Every year since 1999, the Section has organised the **European Consumer Day** in close cooperation with the European Commission and the acting Presidency of the Council. This event allows consumers, businesses and politicians to discuss problems relating to consumption and production within the European Single Market. The European Consumer Day is held either at the EESC headquarters in Brussels, or in the Member State holding the Presidency at the time.

## Competitiveness and support for SMEs

Within the Single Market, the development of SMEs is a key factor for boosting Europe's economic growth. The Committee advocates improvements to the legal, financial and administrative environment for SMEs so that they can make use of their potential and contribute to Europe's economic growth. The Committee was involved in the drafting of the Small Business Act and has been very active in promoting Entrepreneurship and Social Entrepreneurship.

## Financial services

The upsets resulting from the financial crisis have lead society to rethink the world of financial services. The EESC has always promoted better regulation and supervision of financial markets by calling for a safer, more responsible system to be put in place. It is also actively participating in the debate about corporate governance, audit policies and shadow banking.

## Tourism

Tourism is a key sector in Europe, which makes a major contribution to strong economic growth in regions and to the promotion of European heritage. The Committee supports a European tourism, which is attractive, competitive, sustainable and responsible, and has regularly highlighted the cross-cutting nature of this sector. The EESC regularly takes part in the annual **European Tourism Forum**, an event organised by the European Commission, bringing together the main players of the different aspects of tourism.



## Research, development and innovation



Innovation is an essential asset for the development and competitiveness of European businesses. Aware of the importance of this aspect, the European Union has set up framework programmes for research and development with a view to supporting innovation within businesses. The Committee plays an active part in this debate suggesting for example, to set up a risk fund to help compensate for the potential losses linked to innovation. The EESC also issued an opinion on the “Innovation Union” initiative, which places innovation and European research at the heart of the Europe 2020 strategy, and on “Horizon 2020”.

The INT section regularly organises conferences and hearings on a variety of topics such as **“Innovation and enterprise: the role of socio-economic players”** (the conclusions of which were forwarded to the ministers responsible for research and development in the EU), **“Online gambling”**, **“Access to finance for SMEs”**, **“Tax and financial havens”**, **“State aid for regions”** or **“Advertising targeting young people and children”**. Representatives of the European civil society thus have the opportunity to express their views on these issues.

## The Single Market Observatory (SMO)

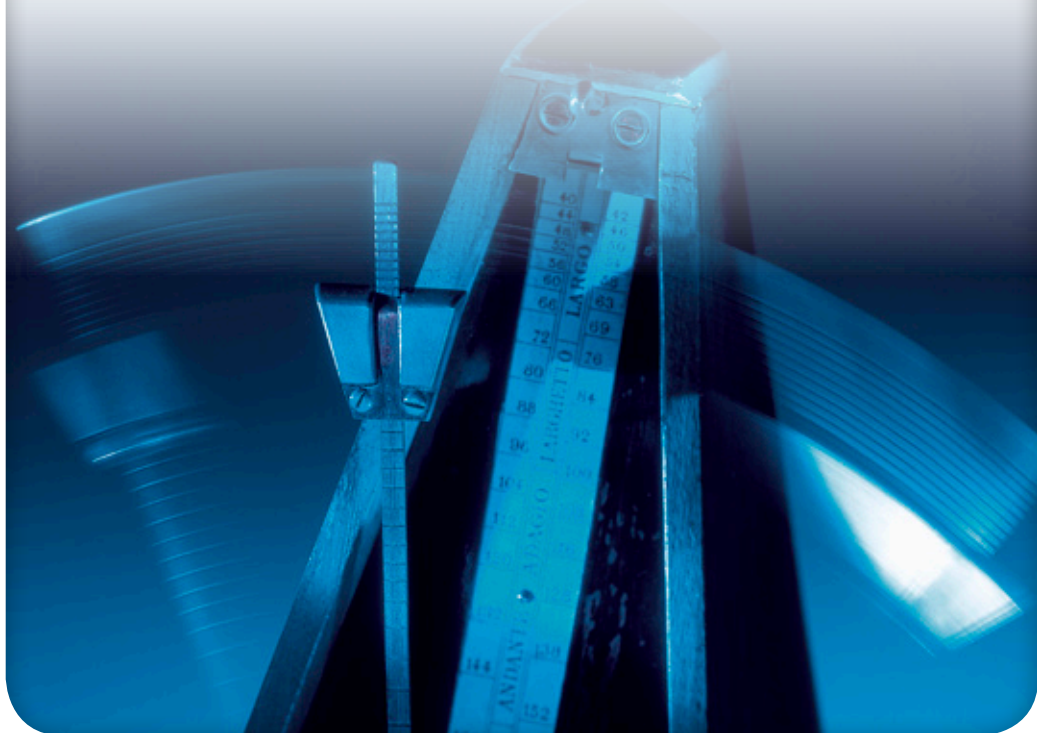
Completion of the Single Market is one element necessary for the European venture to succeed. The EESC has a key role to play here, for the good of both consumers and business. To this end, the EESC set up a Single Market Observatory (SMO) in 1994, with the support of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council. The SMO is made up of 33 members representing European civil society organisations. Its aim is to monitor how the Single Market operates in practice, identify where the problems are and help legislators remedy existing shortcomings. The EESC has set up a database on European self- and co-regulation initiatives, together with the secretariat general of the European Commission.

The SMO cooperates closely with the Commission and the European Parliament on large-scale events such as the Single Market Forum and the Single Market Week.

With a metronome as its logo, the SMO is a measuring instrument which helps bring the right tempo and the most necessary discipline to the Single Market.



**Anna Maria Darmanin**  
*President of the SMO*





## More information



### Section for the Single Market, Production and Consumption

[www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.int-section](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.int-section)

**Find us on**  INT Section EESC

### Single Market Observatory

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**Find us on**  Single Market Observatory  [http://twitter.com/smo\\_eesc](http://twitter.com/smo_eesc)

### Database on self- and co-regulation

[www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.self-and-co-regulation](http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.self-and-co-regulation)

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Published by: "Visits and Publications" Unit  
EESC-2013-50-EN

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QE-02-13-051-DE-C  
ISBN 978-92-830-2136-0



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doi:10.2864/49991