COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 27.11.2003
SEC (2003) 1387

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING PAPER

Review of the rolling programme of actions of the Consumer Policy Strategy 2002-2006

15 September 2003

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING PAPER

Review of the rolling programme of actions of the Consumer Policy Strategy 2002-2006

15 September 2003

INTRODUCTION

The European Commission adopted the Consumer Policy Strategy 2002-2006 in May 2002[1]. Its three key objectives are: "A high common level of consumer protection", "Effective enforcement of consumer protection rules" and "Involvement of consumer organisations in EU policies". The Consumer Policy Strategy provides for its rolling programme of actions to be reviewed regularly through a working document of the services of the Commission.

The Commission plans to issue regular reports on the implementation of the rolling programme of actions. It is the Commission's intention to submit this first report to the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council of 1-2 December 2003, as well as to the European Parliament and to the Economic and Social Committee. This report sets out the state of play as at 15 September 2003.

The Council Resolution on the strategy welcomes this regular review and asks for an assessment and evaluation of the effects of the Community and national activities in support of the objectives of the strategy[2].

The Commission services will constantly monitor the implementation of the strategy and will present a comprehensive ex-post evaluation of the implementation of the strategy and its associated rolling programme of actions. The Commission services will also take into consideration the results of the ex-post evaluation of the Action Plan 1999-2001 which aims at analysing the impact of the measures and actions of the action plan and at drawing conclusions and recommendations for ongoing and future consumer policy development, in particular in the context of an enlarged internal market[3].

Concerning the assessment, the Commission services will suggest to hold a specific meeting of High Level Officials from the Member States in 2004 on the assessment of the effects of the Community and national activities in support of the objectives of the strategy.

Regarding national activities, the annex to this document includes information received from 15 Member States and 5 acceding countries on such national activities. This document simply presents the information provided by Member States. It does not comment or assess the content.

The objective of this review is to take stock of progress, to adjust ongoing actions and to identify new ones. The attached revised rolling programme gives an overview of the state of

---

1 (COM (2002) 208 final)

2 The Council Resolution is available on: http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/overview/cons_policy/resolution_021202_en.pdf

3 Call for tender 2003/S 188-168826

play of consumer policy actions as such and of other EU policies which have an impact on consumers.

Main achievements on core consumer activities from May 2002 until September 2003 can be summarised as follows:

Under the first objective of "A high common level of consumer protection", the Commission achieved major progress in three priority areas: commercial practices, European contract law and safety of services. Following on from the Commission's 2001 Green Paper on EU Consumer Protection and the Follow-up to the Green Paper that took place in 2002, the Commission adopted a proposal for a Directive on Unfair Commercial Practices in June 2003[4]. The Commission's proposal followed several years of consultation with interested parties. This proposal for a full harmonisation framework Directive establishes EU-wide conditions for identifying "unfair" commercial practices that harm consumers' economic interests. It is now being examined by the European Parliament and the Council for adoption through co-decision procedure. The Commission adopted in February 2003 the Action Plan "Towards a more coherent European contract law"[5]. The Action plan suggests three measures, i.e. to increase the coherence of the EC *acquis* in the area of contract law, to promote the elaboration of EU-wide general contract terms, and to examine further whether problems in this area may require non-sector-specific solutions such as an optional instrument. The Commission presented in June 2003 a report on service safety[6], announcing, in particular, its intention to propose a legislative framework to improve the knowledge base in this area by systematic monitoring of service safety, to organise administrative co-operation and to develop European safety standards, if necessary. The report is being discussed in the Council and in the European Parliament.

Under the second objective of "Effective enforcement of consumer protection rules", priority actions are the development of an administrative co-operation framework between Member States and of redress mechanisms for consumers. In July 2003, the Commission adopted a Proposal for a Regulation on administrative co-operation[7] which aims to ensure that consumer protection rules can be implemented better and in a more uniform way, and help cross-border actions through the co-operation between enforcement authorities of the Member States. The proposal should be adopted through co-decision by the Council and by the European Parliament. Regarding the important issue of consumer redress, the Commission has been coordinating and encouraging the synergies between the different networks which give consumers' information and practical help in accessing alternative dispute resolution schemes: namely, the European Consumer Centres[8], the EEJ-Net[9] (European extra-judicial network) and Fin-Net[10]. Commission services are examining the possibility of a merger between the European Consumer Centres and EEJ-Net clearing houses in order to provide a streamlined service to consumers from complaint to dispute resolution.

To achieve the third objective "Involvement of consumer organisations in EU policies", the main actions consist in the review of mechanisms for participation of consumer organisations in all areas of EU policy making[11] and in the setting up of education and capacity-building

---

4 See action 13
5 See action 20
6 See action 1
7 See action 54
8 See action 66
9 See action 61
10 See action 62
11 See action 74

projects[12]. The Commission proposal for a European Parliament and Council Decision establishing a framework for the financing of actions in support of consumer policy 2004-2007 was adopted by the Commission in January 2003[13]. This proposal is currently being discussed by the Council and by the European Parliament. The Commission has also developed a training programme[14] specifically designed for professionals of consumer organisations in order to strengthen their capacity to inform and represent consumers. In parallel, the Commission is developing on-line interactive education tools which will be made available to all, through formal and informal education channels[15].

The challenge of enlargement has been taken into consideration into all consumer policy activities over the last months. The Commission services continued the process of checking transposition and enforcement of consumer protection legislation in the acceding and candidate countries. Seminars on enforcement of consumer policy took place for acceding countries and will continue in 2004[16]. These seminars include working sessions on product safety, on the protection of economic interests of consumers, education and information of consumers and the role of consumer NGOs. Formal and informal contacts have increased significantly.

In order to develop a knowledge-base for consumer policy[17], Commission services have launched a comprehensive work programme. It includes the preparation of studies on issues of particular significance, such as consumer satisfaction indicators, price comparisons, the evaluation of Services of General Interest (SGIs), the safety of goods and services, a comprehensive programme of public opinion polls and surveys, and reinforced co-operation with the Member States, including on consumer complaints. Most of these are being done through calls for tender.

Several actions of other EU policy areas, that have an important consumer dimension, have been achieved. For example, the ongoing debate on Services of General Interest following the adoption of the Commission Green Paper[18] is of major interest to consumers. Further integration of consumer interests in other EU policies remains a major challenge in many policy areas such as competition, internal market, environment, chemicals. This Treaty obligation, enshrined in article 153, should be pursued by the Commission and by other EU institutions.

In conclusion, since the adoption of the strategy in May 2002, the Commission has presented a succession of major legislative initiatives of benefit to consumers. The Commission will work intensively to ensure their earliest possible adoption by the EU institutions. A number of important non-legislative actions have also been undertaken and will be continued. In total, 16 new actions[19] have been introduced, 1 action has been dropped[20] and 1 long-term project is still in its early stage of completion[21]. In general, the Commission services may have been too optimistic regarding the timetable of certain actions. Consequently, some actions have been delayed.

---

12 See actions 78 to 78 sexies
13 See action 80
14 See action 79
15 See action 78
16 See action 60
17 See actions 82 to 89
18 See action 28bis
19 See actions 13bis, 28bis, 34bis, 39bis, 71, 72bis, 72ter, 77bis, 78bis, 78ter, 78quarter, 78quinqies, 78sexies, 80bis, 88bis, 89
20 See action 32
21 See action 21

The next reviews of the rolling programme of actions of the Consumer Policy Strategy 2002-2006 are scheduled for mid 2005 and at the end of 2006. In parallel, services will start preparing a new strategy at the end of 2004. The Commission's intention is to align the timeframe of the new strategy with that of the proposed framework for the financing of actions in support of consumer policy through 2007. The current strategy would therefore be extended until 2007 to coincide with the timeframe of future financial framework which covers 2004-2007.

The Commission will consider whether to propose a single decision to the European Parliament and the Council for a new programme, starting in 2008, which would include both the political strategy and the financing arrangements for actions in the area of consumer policy.

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT[22]

Review of the rolling programme of actions for Consumer Policy (2002-2006)

15 September 2003

OBJECTIVE 1: A HIGH COMMON LEVEL OF CONSUMER PROTECTION

Action	Description	Timeframe	State of play	Assessment
Safety of consumer goods and services				
1. Commission Communication on the safety of services	Identify the needs, possibilities and priorities for Community action on the safety of services and prepare a report on the issue	4th Q[23] 2002 *Revised timeframe:2nd Q 2003*	The report was adopted by the Commission in June 2003[24] and is to be considered by the Council and Parliament in the second half of 2003.	4
2. Commission proposals on the safety of services	Finalise the appropriate proposals for Community action on the safety of services	4th Q 2003 *Revised timeframe: 4th Q 2004*	Subject to the views expressed by the Council and the European Parliament, preparation of the proposals is ongoing. However, they will only be finalised in the 4th quarter 2004, in order to take into account the discussions on the report (cf. above).	\

[22] In the last column of this document, actions are assessed as follows: actions achieved at Commission level: 4, ongoing: \ , pending: √ , not done: σ , dropped: 5 Actions identified in the Consumer Policy Strategy rolling programme of actions adopted on 7 May 2002 are in standard characters. New actions are added in **bold.**

[23] Q = Quarter

[24] COM (2003) 313 final

3. Guidelines to ensure co-ordination between the new General Product Safety Directive (GPSD) and vertical Community legislation on product safety	Finalise a guidance document on the relationships between the GPSD and Community vertical legislation on product safety	2nd Q 2003 *Revised timeframe: 4th Q 2003*	Final consultations ongoing. The document will be available in October 2003	\
4. Guidelines on notification by producers and distributors of dangerous products	Prepare a guide on the contents, criteria and forms for information on dangerous products to be provided, according to the GPSD, by producers and distributors to the competent authorities	2nd Q 2003 *Revised timeframe: 1st Q 2004*	The elements of the guide and form are available. Consultations with stakeholders are in progress in order to finalise these documents and set procedures and tools for their use. The guide and form will be formally adopted in January 2004, when the Commission will have the necessary legal base with the entry into force of the new GPSD	\
5. Decision to launch the assessment of certain product safety standards	Identify the priorities for publication of safety standards under the new GPSD	4th Q 2002	A first group of standards for assessment in view of their possible publication has been identified and the procedure in view of a Commission decision is in progress (see action 6).	4
6. Decision to publish the reference of certain product safety standards and launch new standardisation mandates	Publish the references of certain existing safety standards and launch some standardisation mandates under the new GPSD	4th Q 2003 *Revised timeframe: 2nd Q 2004*	The procedure in view of the publication of the references for a first group of standards is in progress. However, the formal Commission decisions can only be taken when the new GPSD is implemented and therefore the procedure will be finalised in the second quarter of 2004.	\
7. Workshop on chemicals in products/articles	Identify safety issues and potential questions for scientific committees in relation to the release of chemicals from products and articles.	2nd Q 2002	The workshop and an additional one took place in 2003. The results have contributed to the definition of a project on chemicals in consumer products[25].	4

[25] More information available on: http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/cons_safe/news/prod_safety_en.htm

8. Revision of the Toys Directive	Finalise a proposal for a revision of the Toys Directive	2003 *Revised timeframe: 4th Q 2004/1st Q 2005*	A draft proposal for a revised Directive is expected to be ready by November 2003. The Commission should adopt the proposal at the end of 2004 or at the beginning of 2005. An impact assessment study was launched in July 2003.	\
9. Revision of the Low Voltage Directive	Finalise a proposal for the revision of the Low Voltage Directive regulating the safety of electrical products	2003 *Revised timeframe: 4th Q 2004*	The Commission proposal for a revised Low Voltage Directive is expected by the end of 2004.	\
10. Revision of the Cosmetics Directive	Finalise a proposal for the revision of the Directive regulating the safety of cosmetics	2003	Adoption by the Council and the European Parliament of the directive on the revision of the Council directive 76/768/EEC relating to cosmetic products[26]. Adoption by the Commission of several directives on technical adaptation (through comitology procedure).	4 4
11. Revised proposal for a Directive on phthalates in toys	Ensure a permanent solution for preventing risks to child health from phthalates in toys	2002 *Revised timeframe: 4th Q 2003*	An amended proposal is being prepared by the Commission services.	\
12. Proposal for a revised Council Recommendation on Fire Safety in Hotels	Finalise a proposal to update and reinforce the Council Recommendation on Fire Safety in Hotels	3rd Q 2003 *Revised timeframe: 4th Q 2004*	Work is in progress, but a more in depth assessment is necessary in the light of the Parliament's request for a directive proposal.	\

[26] Directive 2003/15/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 February 2003 amending Council Directive 76/768/EEC on the approximation of the law of the Member States relating to cosmetic products (OJ, 11.3.2003, L/66, p.26)

Legislation on consumer economic interests				
Commercial practices				
13. Proposals following the Commission's Green Paper on EU Consumer Protection	Follow-up communication to Green Paper and associated actions. Further research on consumer and business attitudes to the internal market.	2nd Q 2002 2nd Q 2002	Follow-up Communication published on 11 June 2002[27]. Eurobarometer surveys of businesses and consumers carried out in April – September 2002 and published in November 2002[28]. Workshop held in January 2003 at which ex ante Impact Assessment by GFA management was published. Extended Impact Assessment and expert legal analysis published[29]. Proposal for a directive on Unfair Commercial Practices adopted by Commission on 18 June 2003[30].	4 4 4
Review of the existing acquis				
13 bis. Review of legislation relating to EU consumer protection	**Prepare a document setting out a strategy for the review of EU consumer protection legislation**	**Mid-2004**	**Commitment in follow-up Communication to the Green Paper on Consumer Protection[31] to carry out a comprehensive review of the acquis. The document will identify the priorities for review and necessary preparatory work.**	\
14. Amendment to the timeshare directive	Review of the Directive on Timeshare in order to update it and protect consumers against the new developments that have appeared in the	2003 *Revised timeframe: 4th Q*	Part of the overall strategy (cf .13 bis).	\

27 COM (2002) 289 final
28 http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/cons_int/safe_shop/fair_bus_pract/green_pap_comm/studies/index_en.htm
29 http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/cons_int/safe_shop/fair_bus_pract/impact_assessment_en.pdf
30 COM (2003) 356 final
31 http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/cons_int/safe_shop/fair_bus_pract/green_pap_comm/communication_en.pdf

	timeshare market since the adoption of the Directive	*2004*		
15. Amendment to the package travel directive	Review of the Directive on Package Travel in order to update it and strengthening consumer protection in this area	2003-2004 *Revised timeframe: 4th Q 2004*	Part of the overall strategy (cf .13 bis).	\
16. Report on the Directive on price indication	Report on the application of the Directive on Price Indication (98/6/EC) accompanied by a proposal as requested by the Directive	1st Q 2003 *Revised timeframe: 4th Q 2004*	Reports of actions 16, 18, 19 will be published together. Under preparation	\
17. Report on the Directive on injunctions	First report on the Directive on Injunctions For the Protection of Consumers' Interests (98/27/EC) and propose any revisions considered necessary.	3rd Q 2003 *Revised timeframe: 4th Q 2004*	Under preparation	\
17a. Codification of the Injunctions Directive as amended	Proposal published 12.5.2003 (COM(2003) 241 final)	1st Q 2004		4
18. Report on the Directive on distance selling	Report on the Directive on the Protection of Consumers in Respect of Distance Contracts (97/7/EC) and propose any revisions considered necessary.	2nd Q 2001 *Revised timeframe: 4th Q 2004*	Under preparation	\
19. Report on the Directive on certain aspects of the sale of consumer goods and associated guarantees	-Report on the Directive on certain aspects of the sale of consumer goods and associated guarantees (99/44/EC); in particular regarding the use made by Member States of consumers' obligation to report a lack of conformity within a time limit. -Report on the application of this Directive examining in particular the case for introducing the producer's direct liability and,	2nd Q 2003 *Revised timeframe: 4th Q 2004* 3rd Q 2006	Under preparation	\

	if appropriate, accompanied by a proposal			
Law governing consumer contracts				
20. Follow-up to the Communication on European Contract law	-Identify areas in which the diversity of national legislation in the field of contract law may undermine the proper functioning of the internal market and the uniform application of Community law. -Describe in more detail the option(s) in the area of contract law selected following the consultation. In this context, the improvement of existing EC legislation will be pursued. -Develop an action plan for the chronological implementation of the Commission policy conclusions. -Propose the co-ordination of research activities. These activities could lead to the elaboration of a general frame of reference establishing common principles and terminology.	4th Q 2002 *Revised timeframe: 1st Q 2003*	The Commission Action Plan "A more coherent European contract law" was adopted on 12. 2. 2003[32]. It summarises the problems identified during the consultation process, which concern the need for uniform application of EC contract law as well as the smooth functioning of the internal market. This Action Plan suggests a mix of non-regulatory and regulatory measures in order to solve those problems. In addition to appropriate sector-specific interventions, this includes measures : - to increase the coherence of the EC *acquis* in the area of contract law, - to promote the elaboration of EU-wide general contract terms, and - to examine further whether problems in the European contract law area may require non-sector-specific solutions such as an optional instrument.	4
20bis. Follow-up to the Action Plan "A more coherent European contract law"	- Increase the coherence of the EC *acquis* in the area of contract law, via the preparation and elaboration of a Common Frame of Reference, - Promote the elaboration of EU-wide general contract terms, and - Examine further whether problems in the European contract law area may require non-sector-specific solutions such as an optional	2003 - 2007	The Action Plan suggests the preparation of a Common Frame of Reference (CFR) via research, which could be supported by the 6th Framework programme for research and technological development. Mechanisms to involve stakeholders and EC institutions in the process of preparation and elaboration of the CFR have to be developed. The Commission organised during June 2003 two workshops on the Action Plan with Member States, Acceding Countries and stakeholders as well as	\

[32] COM (2003) 68 final

	instrument.		researchers. The Commission is about to analyse the contributions received in the consultation. In the light of this analysis and of the supportive and constructive European Parliament Resolution of 2 September 2003 and of the forthcoming Council Resolution, the research priorities for the CFR will be determined.	
21. Review of existing consumer contract law	Review existing contract law in order to identify inconsistencies and gaps, with a view to simplifying and completing the consumer contract law *acquis*.	2004- 2006	The Commission will seek to increase coherence between instruments, which are part of the EC contract law *acquis*. Proposals will, where appropriate, take into account the Common Frame of Reference (see point 20a). This Common Frame of Reference should provide for best solutions in terms of common terminology and rules.	σ
Financial services				
22. Implementation of the measures set out in the Financial Services Action Plan and the Road Map.	Many of the individual legislative proposals make, or will make, provision for the protection of consumers. This will require wide consultation with all stakeholders including consumers.	2002-2004	The FSAP is well on its way to completion with 35 out of 42 measures finalised. A final sustained effort is necessary on the part of the Commission, Council and European Parliament to adopt outstanding proposals before the deadline of April 2004.	4 and \
23. Retail Payments and Fraud Prevention Action Plan on non-cash means of payment	In particular work on aspects of retail payment security and the deployment of new means of payments. The legal and technical security aspects are covered in the Fraud Prevention Action Plan for non-cash means of payments and in the revision of some existing legislative acts. The intention is to create a single phone line in the EU for "card stop" (for lost or stolen cards). It is also proposed to include several consumer education and awareness raising projects.	2002-2006	The Action Plan is progressing as planned. The single phone number has proven difficult to implement, but work proceeds. The education and awareness initiatives will be co-ordinated within the broader Commission consumer education framework.	\

24. Replace the Consumer Credit Directive (87/102) and its two modifications by a new, substantially updated directive	Amend the existing Directive in order to extend its scope to cover all forms of consumer credit all suppliers of consumer credit; to achieve a better balance of rights and obligations between the consumer and the supplier of credit, and to increase the degree of harmonisation;	2nd Q 2002 *Revised timeframe: 3rd Q 2002*	Proposal adopted by the Commission on 11 September 2002[33]. Council held a policy debate on 19 May 2003 concluding in support for a revised directive covering modern consumer credit and with full harmonisation of core areas; in other areas Member States must be granted flexibility. The European Parliament lead committee (Legal Affairs) adopted a resolution on 10 September 2003 requesting the Commission to withdraw this proposal and to submit a revised proposal. This resolution will be put before the European Parliament Plenary on 5 November 2003.	4
25. Proposal for a comprehensive legislative framework for payments in the internal market (including provisions on refunds)	Transform Recommendation 97/489 on electronic means of payment into binding legislation; update directive 97/5 on cross-border payments in order to add supplementary legal aspects for retail payments in the internal market.	2nd Q 2002 *Revised timeframe: 4th Q 2003-2nd Q 2004*	Communication to be presented by the Commission at the end of 2003; legislative proposal to be presented mid-2004.	\
26. Creation of a forum for financial services users (FINUSE)	Obtain input from consumers and other users of financial services on EU initiatives.	4th Q 2002 *Revised timeframe: 4th Q 2003*	Call for applications was launched in July. Selection of experts to take place in Autumn 2003. The new forum should be established in the 4th quarter 2003	\
Electronic commerce				
27. Commission Recommendation on consumer confidence in electronic commerce	Contribute to the introduction of EU Guidelines for good on-line business practice and help to develop consumers' confidence in cross-border e-commerce by a	2nd Q 2002 *Revised timeframe: 3Q 2003*	In order to allow further contacts with stakeholders and analysis of the state of play on e-commerce, the Commission has delayed the launch of the Recommendation, which is now foreseen for the 3rd	\

[33] COM (2002) 443 final

	Recommendation setting out principles for good on-line business practice and their effective implementation		quarter of 2003.	
28. Measures to improve electronic commerce security	Take a series of measures encompassing awareness-raising, technological support, regulation and international co-ordination	2002 *Revised timeframe: ongoing*	- awareness raising: establishment of best practices, in collaboration with Member States. - technological support: in response to the Communication[34] "Network and Information Security: Proposal for a European Policy Approach", which includes recommendations addressed to the European Standardisation Bodies for the further development of their relevant activities, CEN/ISSS and ETSI set up a joint group ("the NIS Focus Group") of technical experts to produce recommendations in relation to Network and Information Security standardisation. The group started its activity in July 2002 and delivered a draft final report in June 2003, which contains an evaluation of existing security standards, with the purpose of identifying possible standardisation gaps. The final version should be ready in the last quarter of 2003[35]. -regulation: the cyber security task force mentioned in the Communication has developed a proposal for a regulation establishing the European network and Information Agency (ENISA). The agency should be established at the beginning of 2004.	4and

[34] COM(2001)298 final

[35] The report will be available on: http://www.cenorm.be/cenorm/businessdomains/businessdomains/informationsocietystandardizationsystem/public+interest/network+and+information+security+focus+group/nis+focus+group.asp

			- international coordination: collaboration with OECD in the framework of OECD guidelines for the security and information systems and networks.	
Services of General Interest (SGI)				
28bis. Green Paper on Services of General Interest	**The Green paper intends to stimulate a discussion on the role of the EU in promoting the provision of high-quality public services for the benefit of citizens and business in Europe. It takes into account the context of globalisation and liberalisation, and raises the question whether there is a need for creating a general legal framework for services of general interest at Community level. The Green paper reviews several topics, among which universal service and consumer protection.**	**2003**	**The Green Paper was adopted on 21 May 2003[36]. The public consultation period ended on 15 September 2003. Comments received can be consulted at the following address:** http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/services_general_interest/index_fr.htm	4
29. Involve consumer representatives in policy, evaluation and monitoring of SGI	-Develop mechanisms at EU level for involving consumer representatives in the development of policies for SGIs, and to ensure their participation in the monitoring and evaluation of outcomes delivered for consumers -Promote, in co-operation with Member States and consumer groups, the setting up of bodies representing the interests of consumers in individual SGIs.	2002-2006	Consumer representatives were invited to contribute to the Green paper on services of general interest (see point 29). They are invited to hearings organised by sectoral DGs. The Consumer Committee is informed of the developments in the area of services of general interest.	

[36] COM (2003) 270 final

30. Improve the sector reporting and to strengthen the consumer focus	Work in co-operation with sectoral DGs and consumer groups to highlight consumer issues in sector reporting.	2002-2006		\
31. Communication on a methodology for conducting horizontal evaluations and Commission annual report on horizontal evaluation.	Produce a coherent and consistent methodology for evaluating the performance in SGI sectors, including assessments of the quality of services and consumer satisfaction and to report annually on this.	2002-2006	A "methodological note for the horizontal evaluation of services of general economic interest" [37] was published on 18 June 2002. It provides for the production of yearly reports in which the monitoring of consumers' opinions about the performance of services of general interest is a key aspect. A report was published in January 2003 including the results of the eurobarometer 58 on consumers' opinions on services of general interest[38]. The next report is scheduled for January 2004.	4
32. Development of a system of benchmarking in certain areas of services of general interest	Work with Member States and other public authorities on a system of benchmarking in areas of SGI not covered by sector reporting or the regular horizontal evaluation	2002-2006	Sectoral reporting is being developed in areas of SGI such as transport, telecommunications, energy and postal services. Further sectors where reporting is not developed yet could be included in the horizontal SGI evaluation of the Commission (see action 31) in the future. For example, water sector may be considered (see new action 39bis). Therefore, action 32 can be deleted since its main purpose is covered in other actions of this rolling plan. However, it is still important that sectoral DGs continue and deepen their reporting and benchmarking efforts in the SGI area both in sectors already covered and in "new" sectors and strengthen the consumer focus, as mentioned in action 30.	5

[37] COM (2002) 331 final

[38] http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/en/update/economicreform/cardiff-03-full_en.pdf

33. Monitoring of consumer satisfaction in the area of services of general interest	-Continue regular Eurobarometer surveys and qualitative focus group surveys in order to monitor levels of consumer satisfaction in the SGI. -Develop more rigorous indicators for measuring consumer satisfaction in the SGI.	2002-2006	The results of Eurobarometer 58 on consumers' opinions on services of general interest were published on 28 January 2003[39]. A similar eurobarometer survey is tabled in the accession countries and is to be published by the end of 2003. A focus group survey on consumers and services of general interest is also tabled to take place in the Autumn 2003 and results to be published at the end of 2003 / beginning of 2004.	4
SGI – Transport				
34. Commission Proposal for a regulation concerning requirements relating to air transport contracts.	Clarify air passenger contracts and improve the rights of consumers	2003 *Revised timeframe: ongoing*	A public consultation on airlines' contract with passengers was organised from June to September 2002. A public hearing took place on 14 March 2003. 46 contributions were received, of which 13 from consumer organisations. A summary of the responses is available on the Internet at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/air/rights/doc_consult_contracts/summary_consultation_paper_en.pdf The Commission services are currently examining how to address the issues raised by the results of the consultation.	
34 bis. Commission Proposal for a regulation concerning rights of passengers with reduced mobility in air	Provide passengers with reduced mobility with a non-discrimination guarantee and ensure provision of special assistance free of	2003	This is a result of the public consultation on airlines contracts with passengers launched in 2002. A draft is currently in preparation within Commission services; adoption of the proposal by the Commission	

[39] The report and data are available at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/cons_int/serv_gen/cons_satisf/index_en.htm

transport	charge		is planned by the end of 2003.	
35. Produce consumer reports on air service quality	Focus on indicators of service quality including notably flight punctuality, flight cancellations, denied boarding because of overbooking, loss and damage of baggage and complaints filed by passengers.	2002-2006	A study, entitled "Pilot phase of the Community Air Passenger Reporting System", will be tested, in a trial phase. Reporting carriers will start to report data on a voluntary basis from mid-July 2003 onwards. The data will cover punctuality, flight cancellations, denied boarding and baggage mishandling. The publication (on the internet) of the service quality indicators will start during the summer based on these data. The access to the data will initially be restricted until sufficient maturity and accuracy of the reporting system is reached. The study will also provide elements to support the Extended Impact Assessment. Based on the results of the trial phase, the Commission will take a final decision on the necessary legislative action in the fall of 2003.	\
36. Commission Proposals extending Community measures protecting air passengers' rights to other modes of transport.	Extend the Community measures protecting passengers' rights as far as possible to include other modes of transport other than air transport, and in particular the railways, maritime transport and, as far as possible, urban transport services. This concerns in particular service quality and the development of quality indicators, contract conditions, transparency of information and extra-judicial dispute settlement mechanisms.	2002-2004	Railways: see point 37 Maritime Transport**:** the Commission Proposal for a Council Decision concerning the conclusion by the European Community of the Protocol of 2002 to the Athens Convention Relating to the Carriage of Passengers and their Luggage by Sea, 1974, was adopted on 24.06.2003[40]. The ratification by the Community of this Protocol is necessary in order to allow the Member States to become parties to the new Protocol. The proposal requires Member States to become parties to the new Protocol by 31 December 2005.	4

[40] COM (2003) 375 final

			At the end of 2003, the Commission will table a draft Regulation implementing the Athens' Protocol provisions relating to liability for death and personal injury of passengers. The Regulation will also include rules on liability to domestic passenger traffic, which is not covered by the Athens Convention. <u>Urban transport services:</u> the Commission services will review the position in the light of the responses to the Green Paper on services of general economic interest. In particular, the discussion on how far quality standards and public service obligations for services of general interest, including public transport services, should be dealt at EU level in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity.	\ \
37. Commission Proposal for a regulation on international rail passenger rights and obligations	Include provisions on fair contracts; consumer consultation; complaint handling and dispute settlement mechanisms; and compensation for delays.	By the end of 2002 – beginning 2003 *Revised timeframe: 4 Q 2003*	The formal launch of this proposal has been postponed until the last quarter of 2003 in order to allow the Railway sector to come up with proposals to improve passengers' rights (see point 39). If a proposal is tabled, it will be presented together with a proposal on the opening of the market for international passenger services by rail.	√
38. Promotion of Rail transport users' organisations.	Promote the setting up of a European platform of Rail Passenger Organisations for negotiation and consultation purposes	2002-2004	Commission services are still in favour of this platform, though it was not possible to provide a financial support for the organisation of a Conference. Commission services gave presentations at European platforms for consumer organisations in 2003 to support their work.	√
39. Promotion of voluntary actions by rail companies to improve service quality and information	Encourage rail operators to develop a voluntary charter on service quality covering such issues as punctuality, provision of	2002-2003 *Revised timeframe:4Q*	The Commission has encouraged "The Community of European Railways (CER)" to start the development of a Charter for International Rail	\

	information in electronic form, accessibility for groups with special needs, such as persons with reduced mobility or persons travelling with their bike, and protection of non-smokers.	*2003*	Passengers' Rights, which is expected to be made public in the last quarter of 2003. On the basis of this Charter, the Commission will assess if, and to what extent, additional legislative actions will be required to ensure the protection of passengers' rights and obligations in international Rail Transport.	
SGI –Energy				
39 bis. Commission review of legal and administrative position in water and waste water sector including competition aspects, possible white paper and follow-up measures possibly including legislation	**Closely monitor and be involved in process to ensure universal service and consumer rights are protected**	**4th Q 2004**	**Commission beginning information-gathering exercise**	**New**
40. Monitor the implementation of the internal electricity and gas market rules	Continue to monitor the implementation of the internal electricity and gas market rules, in particular regarding their effect on consumers	ongoing	The Commission re-issued its second benchmarking report in April 2003[41], which, for the first time included candidate countries. A third monitoring exercise is underway which will cover the period of 2002-03. Among other things, the price and quality of service to customers will form a key part of the monitoring effort, including the measures taken to protect vulnerable customers.	4
40bis. Directive 2003/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2003 concerning	The Directive finalises the internal market in these energy areas by offering the rights to the users to choose their energy suppliers. The	2004-2007	The Commission is preparing some interpreting notes to help the Member States implement the directives provisions correctly.	

[41] SEC (2003) 448 of 7.04.2003

common rules for the internal markets in electricity and repealing directive 96/92/EC .Directive 2003/55/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2003 concerning common rules for the internal market in natural gas and repealing Directive 98/30/EC [42]	opening-up of the market will be effective as from July 2004 for business users and in July 2007 for households. The directive contains a provision with some minimum requirements to protect the consumers economic interests, notably an obligation to disclose information and to guarantee the respect of the universal service obligation		As regards the obligation to disclose information to the consumers, the Commission has asked a consultant to study how best the minimum information obligations contained in the directive can be implemented by the national authorities. The final report has been finalised in September 2003[43].	
SGI Postal services				
40.ter Monitor the implementation of the internal market rules in the area of postal services (article 23 of directive 97/67/EC)	Continue to monitor the implementation of the quality requirements for postal services, with a view to possibly adjust or even upgrade them, taking into account the interests of the consumers	ongoing	The Commission issued the first report in November 2002[44]. A second monitoring exercise is underway. A study on quality requirements was launched by the Commission in 2003. The study will make recommendations as to the next steps to take, including possible adjustments or upgrading of the existing standards. The views of the service users are fully taken op board, including the final consumer.	\
40.quarter. Proposal for a Council directive amending Directive 77/388 as regards the value added tax on services, provided in the postal sector	Amend the existing directive to remove the VAT exemption currently granted to the public postal services suppliers in order to eliminate competitive distortions. In order to limit the likely price increases for the final consumer, member States are given an option to apply a reduced rate for the services that are most used by the consumers	ongoing	The proposal was adopted by the Commission in May 2003[45].	4

[42] OJ L 176/37 of 15.07.03
[43] The report can be found on: http://europa.eu.int/comm/energy/electricity/publications/index_en.htm
[44] COM (2002) 632
[45] COM (2003) 234 final

SGI - Telecommunications				
41. Monitor the implementation of the telecommunication market rules	Continue to monitor the implementation of the telecommunications market rules, in particular regarding their effect on consumers.	ongoing	The eighth report on the implementation of the Telecommunications regulatory package[46] includes a section on "universal service consumer and user issues".	\
Competition				
42. Studies on the efficiency and functioning of mergers	Identify the criteria and methods to evaluate efficiency claims in mergers	2003 *Revised timeframe: 3rdQ 2003*	Commission services have commissioned two studies to enable it to better assess the effect of mergers on consumers.	\
43. Actions to inform consumers about competition policy and its impact on them	Enable consumers to identify and thus help them to bring to the Commission's attention anti-competitive activities	2002-2003 *Revised timeframe:2004*	Commission services envisage the creation of a "consumer liaison officer" in order to develop the participation of consumers in anti-trust and merger procedures.	\
44. Organisation of the biannual "European Competition Day"	Organisation together with the Presidency of the biannual "European Competition Day" focussing on topics which illustrate the benefits for the consumer deriving from competition	2002-2006	This conference, designed for a public audience and organised in the Member State holding the EU Presidency is being continued.	\

[46] COM (2002) 695 final of 3.12.2002

Environment				
45. Communication on Environment and Health	The Communication will establish a strategy consisting of a holistic approach integrating health aspects into various environmental policies with the purpose of limiting the impact of environmental hazards to human health, paying special attention to children.	2002 *Revised timeframe: 3Q 2003*	Communication adopted on 11.6.2003[47]. Follow-up will be in the form of an "Action Plan 2004-2010" to be adopted in June 2004	4
46. White Paper on Integrated Product Policy	This will seek to draw up a strategy for implementing IPP on an EU level. Taking the environmental problems caused by products across their life cycle as the starting point it will seek to reduce their environmental impacts. All actors having an influence on these – designers, manufacturers, distributors, retailers, consumers and waste experts will be involved.	2002 *Revised timeframe: 3Q 2003*	Communication (instead of White Paper) on IPP adopted on 18.6.2003[48]. Follow-up will be in the form of various concrete actions over the medium term.	4
47. Development and marketing of the EU Eco-label	The EU Eco-label provides a guarantee for consumers that wherever they are in the EU, any product they purchase that bears the EU Eco-label will meet the highest European environmental standards. Criteria for further product groups will be developed. Increased marketing activities will be pursued to increase the Eco-label's visibility.	2002	Since 2002 new EU Eco-label criteria have been adopted for tourism accommodation. Promotional activities continue[49]	4 and
48. Commission proposal on chemicals	New legislation on chemicals will be prepared, as the large majority of chemicals	4th Q 2002 *Revised*	Draft proposal has been subject to 8-week internet consultation on workability[50]. Formal proposal before	

[47] COM (2003) 338 final
[48] COM (2003) 302 final
[49] For more information: http://europa.eu.int/ecolabel

	have been on the market for many years without sufficient knowledge about their risks. This will provide for adequate risk reduction measures, and will increase the level of protection of human health and the environment. All stakeholders, including consumers, will have better access to information about chemicals to make better-informed choices about the chemicals they use and are exposed to.	*timeframe: 4Q 2003*	end of October 2003.	
49. Commission initiatives on sustainable consumption	As a follow-up to the Sixth Environment Action Programme, take forward appropriate initiatives for Community action on promotion of sustainable production and consumption patterns.	4th Q 2004	The Commission will prepare actions aiming to fulfil the commitment made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development to develop a 10 year framework of programmes to promote sustainable production and consumption.	\
50. Commission proposal for a directive to reduce further the Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) emissions during the use of products	A *possible* proposal for a directive to reduce furthers the VOC emissions during the use of products. Consumer goods, such as paints would be under its scope	3rd Q 2002	Commission proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the limitation of emissions of volatile organic compounds due to the use of organic solvents in decorative paints and varnishes and vehicle refinishing products and amending directive 1999/13/EC[51] adopted at the end of 2002.	4
51. Commission Recommendation on Consumer Information on the Fuel Economy and CO2 emissions of new passenger cars	Under the directive[52] the Commission is required to take measures to enable the provisions on promotional literature to non-printed material. This may include internet	2003	Adopted as Commission Recommendation of 26th March 2003[53]	4

50 http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/chemicals/whitepaper.htm#Internet%20Consultation

51 COM (2002) 750 final of 23rd December 2002

52 Directive 1999/94/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 1999 relating to the availability of consumer information on fuel economy and CO2 emissions in respect of the marketing of new passenger cars (OJ L12, 18.1.2000, p.16)

	marketing and radio and TV advertising.			
International trade				
52. Promotion of the consumer interests within EC positions during the next Round of WTO negotiations, in bilateral negotiations, and in the standardisation process.	Promote and protect consumer interests the consumer interests in the WTO in general and in the on-going WTO Round of negotiations launched in Doha in particular, as well as in the context of bilateral trade relations. Maintain a dialogue with consumer organisations to this end. Promote consumer participation in international standardisation. The Commission believes there is a need for consumer interest to be taken into account in work programmes of international standardisation bodies, including proposals for standards and final results. This not only entails that such documents should be made easily accessible to all interested parties, including consumers, but also that procedures should ensure that adequate time and opportunities are provided for involvement of consumer interests in the standardisation process and for commenting.	ongoing	The EC has reached out to civil society, including consumers, in relation to its trade agenda. The Commission is working to enhance further these links and details of past and upcoming meetings and discussions are available on the DG Trade website[54]. Consumers were represented through the participation of BEUC in the EC Delegation for the WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancún in September 2003. The Commission also discusses trade issues with consumer organisations in the context of the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue (TACD). The EC has also actively supported efforts by the WTO to reach out to civil society. In the WTO, the EC underlined the importance of ensuring the consumers' right to information with regard to labelling in a recent submission[55].	4and
53. Examine existing private labelling schemes	Examine existing private labelling schemes, such as organic labelling, environmental and social labelling (Fair Trade and ethical trade),	2002-2003	With regard to corporate social responsibility initiatives[56], the Commission has invited the EU Multi-Stakeholder Forum on CSR to define	

53 OJ L 82/33 of 29.3.2003
54 http://trade-info.cec.eu.int/civil_soc/intro1.php
55 ref. G/TBT/W/197
56 http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-dial/csr/csr_index.htm

	to assess their effectiveness and the need for further measures in achieving the objectives of transparency and information for consumers with a view to sustainable development.		commonly agreed guidelines for social labelling schemes. At the end of 2004 the Commission will assess the results of the CSR Forum, and consider the need to adopt further measures to promote the effectiveness of social labelling schemes. The Commission has finalised guidelines for making and assessing environmental self-declared claims by producers or distributors, based on international (ISO) standards, with the objective of preventing misleading claims and encouraging good ones[57]	

OBJECTIVE 2: EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION RULES

Action	Description	Timeframe	State of play	Assessment
Enforcement co-operation between Member States				
54. Commission Proposal for a legal basis for administrative co-operation between Member States	This proposal is intended to include the setting-up of a committee of representatives of national administrations.	4th Q 2002 *Revised timeframe: 3rd Q 2003*	Proposal adopted on 23 July 2003[58]. Delayed due to further consultation with Member States than originally foreseen.	4
55. Establish a website and data base for International Marketing	Website for information exchange purposes and a database to register enforcement related	Ongoing	The ICPEN-Europe website is operational and its information is regularly updated[59]. The database has	4

57 http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/cons_safe/news/other_en.htm
58 COM (2003) 443 final
59 https://adns.cec.eu.int/IMSNEUROPE/SilverStream/Pages/index.html

Supervision Network-Europe (IMSN-Europe)	information		been used for both "Best Practice Days" organised by the network in November 2002 and May 2003.	
56. Update of the CLAB ("unfair contact terms") data base	Update the European Database on Case Law about Unfair Contract Terms established to monitor practical enforcement of Directive 93/13/EEC.	Call for tender for the years 2000 to 2005	The CLAB database[60] now contains more than 10000 'cases' and a new user friendlier interface allows interested parties and the public at large to access these 'cases'.	4 and
Enforcement aspects of product and service safety				
57. European framework for the collection and assessment of data on product related injuries	Finalise the appropriate initiatives to ensure systematic collection and assessment of data on product-related injuries	3rd Q 2003	Activities within the framework of the Health programme ongoing. However, new initiatives for the longer term should be considered. No precise planning possible yet.	
58. Guidelines to ensure the effective functioning of the Rapid Alert System (RAPEX) of the GPSD	Finalise and implement guidelines on the functioning of a reinforced RAPEX system	4th Q 2002 *Revised timeframe: 1Q 2004*	The new guidelines have been drafted and progressively being implemented. They will be further refined in the light of consultations and practical experience in 2003, in view of their formal adoption in January 2004, when the new GPSD enters into force.	
59. Establishment of the Consumer Product Safety Network under the GPSD	Launch administrative co-operation activities between market surveillance and enforcement authorities to facilitate the effective and consistent application of the new GPSD	1st Q 2003 *Revised timeframe:* ongoing	This is an ongoing activity. First steps have been done and further developments are in progress.	
60. Strengthening of product safety enforcement in candidate countries	Implementation of the revised general product safety directive, in particular through candidate country participation in the reinforced "rapid alert system" (RAPEX).	2nd Q 2003 *Revised timeframe: ongoing*	This action is in progress. It involves participation of accession countries in the Emergencies Committee and Working Groups, seminars and training for groups of accession and candidate countries on enforcement of consumer policy, with a particular	4 and

[60] https://adns.cec.eu.int/CLAB/SilverStream/Pages/pgEntryClabAnonymous.html

			focus on market surveillance and general product safety (first three seminars held in 2003).	
Redress				
Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADRs)				
61. Support and development of the EEJ-Net	In the first phase, completion of the 1 year pilot phase and report upon its effectiveness. In the second phase continue to improve co-operation and the service that the EEJ-Net will provide to users.	2002 *Revised timeframe: end 2003: end of the pilot phase* *2004-2006: reinforcement and extension of the network*	The EEJ-Net conference was held in Brussels on 10-11 June 2003 to evaluate the work of this pilot project so far and to plan for the future. The outcome of the conference, together with data presented there, will form the basis of a full report to be presented to the Council and the European Parliament by the end 2003. Commission services have been examining the different implications of a possible merger between the European Consumer Centres (ECC) and EEJ-Net Clearing Houses. The synergies between the two networks are rather important. Full advantage should be taken of them to provide a streamlined service to consumers from complaint to dispute resolution. A TAIEX[61] conference was held in Brussels on 12 June 2003. Its objective was to brief New Member States on the functioning of the ECCs and EEJ-Net and to kick off preparations for the extension of these networks to new member States.	4 4
62. Support and development of FIN-NET	FIN-NET, the EU-wide complaints network for financial services, was set up in 2001 to facilitate consumers' access to out-of-court	ongoing	The statistics for 2002, the first year of FIN-NET's full operation, show an increase of 45% in the number of cross-border complaints handled by	

[61] http://www.taiex.be

	settlement of cross border disputes when the consumer and their financial service provider come from different Member States.		competent schemes. Also the network grows regularly. The FIN-NET members meet several times a year; the next meeting is scheduled for October 2003. The integration of dispute settlement bodies from the Acceding Countries is the FIN-NET's main task for the incoming months. During the EEJ-net conference the relation between the EEJ network and other networks was examined. Co-operations between networks should be further developed.	
63. Promotion of the principles under the 1998 and 2001 Commission Recommendations on ADRs	An update of the existing database of out-of-court bodies under the 1998 Recommendation[62] will be conducted. In addition, Member States have been invited to notify the Commission of the details of their national ADRs that apply the principles of the 2001 Recommendation in order to create a second database and to monitor the effectiveness of the application of both Recommendations on ADRs by the Member States. Both databases will be accessible to the public on the Europa website.	ongoing	The database created under the 1998 recommendation is updated on a regular basis and is made available on the re-designed website of the Consumer Affairs Directorate[63]. A new database under the 2001 recommendation will be build up. Both databases will be introduced on the EEJ-Net website and improved with a search engine.	4
64. Communication on the promotion of online dispute resolution (ODR) services in the global information society.	As part of the eEurope initiative the Commission will adopt a Communication on promoting confidence in ODR services for settling cross-border disputes in the Information Society. It will aim to encourage	2002-2003	A Commission Communication on this issue will be presented before the end of 2003.	

[62] The Commission has adopted two Recommendations on the principles applicable to the bodies responsible for the out-of-court settlement of consumer disputes (98/257/EC, OJ L 115, 17.4.1998, p.31) and on the principles for out-of-court bodies involved in the consensual resolution of consumer disputes (2001/310/EC, OJ L 109, 19.4.2001, p.56)

[63] http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/redress/out_of_court/database/index_en.htm

	consensus with stakeholders at global level on criteria and guidelines for ODR certification schemes.			
65. Establishment of an EU wide on-line ADR schemes, "ECODIR"	ECODIR will provide a pan-European on-line consumer mediation service.	4th Q 2002	ECODIR was awarded a contract extension to 30 June 2003 and the "activity report" will be analysed during the last quarter of 2003.	\
European Consumer Centres (euroguichets) ECCs				
66. Development of the network	-To have a centre in each member state and extend the network to the candidate countries. EEA countries can participate if they wish. -Develop record system	2nd Q 2004 4th Q 2002	- Today the ECCs are a network of 15 entities located in 13 Member States (AUS, BE, FIN, FR, DE, EL, ES, IRL, IT, LUX, PT, SV, UK). The opening up of the Greek ECC occurred on 8 May 2003 in Athens. Ongoing discussions with DK. - A common ECCs registration form has been developed. Ongoing work on a better synergy with both the EEJ-Net and Interactive Policy Making (IPM) complaint handling systems. - Commission services have been examining the different practical implications of a possible merge between the ECCs and the EEJ-Net Clearing Houses. Indeed the merging of these structures should be encouraged in order to create one network of "Consumer help Centres" which would provide a full range of services to European consumers (see action 61).	4 4 \
67. Interactive policy making – "your	IPM involves the development of two	2002-2006	Both tools, on-line consultations and the feedback	4

voice in Europe"	Internet-based mechanisms to enable the Commission to assess the impact of EU policies on the ground. These are feedback mechanisms which help to collect spontaneous reactions in the marketplace, and a consultation mechanism designed to receive stakeholder views to new legislative proposals or other policy initiatives. The European Consumer Centres will become an active partner in the IPM initiative by encoding problems that consumers have in the Internal Market		database, of the Internet-based IPM system are operational. 'Your Voice in Europe[64]' was launched in January 2003 as the 'single access point' for all Commission consultations. Its 'Your Experience' section provides stakeholders with links to those networks, including European Consumer Centres (ECCs), that are active partners in the IPM Feedback mechanism. The ECC network is an active partner in the Feedback system since February 2003 and has encoded 600 cases relating to consumer problems, both on services and goods. The IPM system allows for inclusion of consumer problems related to/within Accession Countries.	
Effective Problem Solving in the Internal Market – SOLVIT				
68. Effective Problem Solving in the Internal Market – SOLVIT	SOLVIT is a network of Co-ordination Centres and Contact Points in the Member States involving officials involved in the day-to-day practised administration of the Internal Market. It will contribute to the resolution of cross border problems emanating from the misapplication of Internal Market rules for the benefit of both citizens and businesses. A key element is a database and the use of electronic communications to connect administrations in Member States.	2002-2006	Operational since 22 July 2002 and has dealt with 138 cases at 15 June 2003. On average SOLVIT has a 75% success rate. In autumn 2003, SOLVIT will be opened up to allow cases to be put on-line directly by organisations such as Members of the European Parliament, Citizens Advice Centres, Euro Info Centres, Euroguichets; Chambers of Commerce and Trade Associations.	4 and

[64] http://europa.eu.int/voice

Judicial cooperation in civil matters				
69. Commission proposal for a Council Directive to improve access to justice in cross-border disputes by establishing minimum common rules relating to legal aid and other financial aspects of civil proceedings	The proposal aims to : - improve access to justice in cross-border disputes by establishing minimum common rules relating to legal aid; - guarantee that an adequate level of legal aid is granted, under certain conditions, to persons whose financial situation makes it impossible for them to bear the cost of the proceedings; and, - facilitate the compatibility of national laws on this subject and to establish cooperation mechanisms between Member State authorities.	Proposal adopted on 18 January 2002[65]	Directive adopted on 27 January 2003[66] Member States to implement the Directive by 30 November 2004.	4
70. Green Paper on measures to create a uniform European procedure for a payment order and on measures to simplify and speed up cross-border litigation on small claims.	Examine the systems existing in Member States with a view to consulting on possible measures at EU level.	4th Q 2002 4th Q 2003	Green Paper on a European order for payment procedure and on measures to simplify and speed up small claims litigation adopted on 20 December 2002[67]. In November 2003 the Commission is planning to present a proposal for a Regulation to establish a European order for payment procedure, to be followed in 2004 by a proposal for legislation on	4 \

[65] COM (2002)13 final

[66] Council Directive 2003/8/EC to improve access to justice in cross-border disputes by establishing minimum common rules relating to legal aid for such disputes, JO L26, 31 January 2003

[67] COM(2002) 746 final

			small claims.	
71. Green Paper on Alternative Dispute Resolution	Take stock of the existing situation and consult broadly with the view of setting future priorities in this area.	3rd Q 2002 4th Q 2004	Green Paper adopted on 19 April 2002[68]. Work will start in 2003 to develop a European plan for best practice in mediation. **In the second half of 2004, the Commission is planning to present a proposal for a Directive to promote mediation.**	4 **New**
71bis. Green Paper on the conversion of the Rome Convention of 1980 on the law applicable to contractual obligations into a Community instrument and its modernisation	Examine the functioning of the 1980 Rome Convention, and especially the question of the law applicable to consumer contracts.	1st Q 2003 4th Q 2004	Green Paper adopted on 14 January 2003 (COM (2002) 654 final). In the last quarter of 2004, the Commission is planning to present a proposal for an instrument on the law applicable to contractual obligations.	4 \
Support to consumer associations				
72. Organisation of a training course for consumers associations	Organise a special training course for consumer associations relating to market surveillance in the context of the revised GPSD. It will also explore the possibility of launching further co-ordinated initiatives with Member States when the Directive comes into force	4th Q 2004	Preparatory work to be launched in the second half of 2003. Need for further discussions to clarify interest of consumer associations. If the contacts are successful, the course is likely to take place in the second half of 2004, in conjunction with the application of the new GPSD.	\

[68] COM (2002) 196 final

OBJECTIVE 3: PROPER INVOLVEMENT OF CONSUMER ORGANISATIONS IN EU POLICIES

Action	Description	Timeframe	State of play	Assessment
Reviewing mechanisms for participation of consumer organisations in EU policy making				
Consumer Committee				
72 bis. Review of Commission Decision 2000/323/EC setting up a Consumer Committee	**Adaptation of the provisions of the decision to reflect the evolution of the political and legal framework for consumer policy, improvement of the transparency and effectiveness of the operation of the CC**	**3rd Q 2003 - …**	**This Decision should be adopted in October 2003.**	**New**
72 ter. Appointment of new Consumer Committee members	**Current CC mandate expires September 2003**	**3rd Q 2003 - …**	**Ready for launch of consultation after adoption of action 72 bis. To be adopted by October 2003.**	**New**
Consultation standards				
73. Commission Proposal for minimum standards for the conduct of the consultation process	As part of the White Paper on governance and of the Better Regulation Action plan, the Commission intends to establish minimum standards for the conduct of the consultation process.	2nd Q 2002 *Revised timeframe: 3rd Q 2002*	The Communication on general principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties was adopted on 11.12.2002[69].	4

[69] COM(2002)704 http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/sgc/consultation/index_en.htm

Participation in EC Committees and working groups				
74. Assessment of consumer participation within EU consultative committees	The Inter-Service Group on Consumer Policy will assess and co-ordinate consumer participation within EU consultative committees to determine whether and where consumer input is lacking and therefore could be improved and further developed.	2nd Q 2002 *Revised timeframe: 4th Q 2003-1stQ 2004*	The Commission services are assessing consumer participation in Commission consultative committees and working groups including conclusions to improve consumer representation and participation and should publish a working document.	\
Standardisation work				
75. Launch of a co-operation project to promote consumer participation in standardisation	Launch co-ordinated action at Community and national level to ensure the effective participation of consumer representatives in standardisation work and the decision making process of European standardisation bodies	2003	Consultations will be launched in the second half of 2003 to re-assess the factual situation and problems of consumer representation in standardisation in view of identifying needs and possibilities for new initiatives in this area in the longer term.	\
Reinforce the co-operation between Commission Directorates General				
76. Organisation of regular meetings of the inter-service group on Consumer Policy	Reinforce the co-operation between Commission Directorates General on consumer policy to improve integration of consumer concerns within other EU policy areas.	2002-2006	The inter-service group on Consumer Policy met twice since the adoption of the Consumer Policy Strategy. Information on consumer policy is being circulated to the group. Co-operation to be further reinforced in the future.	4and \
Consumer information and education				
Information				
77. Development of information policy tools for consumers	The Commission will pursue its efforts to improve its information policy towards	2002-2006	The Commission website for consumer affairs has been revamped[70]. The Consumer Policy Strategy	4and \

[70] http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/index_en.htm

	consumers. It will focus its future information campaigns on tobacco prevention for young people.		2002-2006 has been published and widely distributed to interested stakeholders. The Commission launched in 2002 a Europe-wide media campaign to prevent smoking among adolescents in the European Union[71]. This campaign will continue in 2003 and 2004.	
77bis. Information campaigns on EU consumer rights in new MS	**The Commission will launch information campaigns to make EU consumer rights known to consumers in the new MS, and to simultaneously promote the role of national consumer organisations as a point of reference and further information**	2004-2006		**New**
Education				
78. Development of on-line inter-active education tools	The Commission will develop on-line inter-active education tools that can be used by consumer associations for further training of their own staff in specific aspects of cross-border transactions and of the EU consumer rights in the Internal Market. The Commission will also develop sector-specific tools on consumer items more likely to be traded, such as cross-border services, and in particular financial services. The Commission will explore with Member States how to capitalise on similar work done by Member States or by consumer organisations so that tools can be developed to exchange best practices.	2002 *Revised timeframe:2004 -2005*	On 20 June 2003, the Commission launched a call for tender for the development of on-line inter-active education tools[72]. These tools could be used in various settings: schools, university courses, adult education courses, and consumer associations. The first two modules will focus on: basic consumer rights, the advantages of the internal market and redress possibilities on the one hand and financial services (comparing prices, asset allocation, understanding products and services) on the other hand.	

[71] http://www.feel-free.info/
[72] http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/health_consumer/library/tenders/index_en.html

78bis. Conception, design, printing and distribution in the EU of a European student diary for 15-18 year old secondary school children	**With the specific aim of encouraging young people in the EU to become more aware as consumers, by getting them to work and reflect on consumer-linked themes such as fair trading, product safety, safe e-shopping, on line dispute resolution, advertising regulations comparisons, debt, etc.,**	**2003/2007**	**On 1 July 2003[73], the Commission launched a call for tender for the publishing and free distribution of at least 400.000 copies of a European consumer diary.**	**New**
78ter. Interactive radio-programme	**The Commission will examine the possibility of launching an interactive radio programme on consumer issues in the EU for young people**	**2004/2008**		**New**
78quater. European Master degree in consumer issues	**The Commission will examine the possibility of developing with the European universities a European master degree in consumer issues.**	**2004/2005**		**New**
78quinquies European Network in Consumer Education (Higher Education – Erasmus)	**The Consumer Citizenship Network (CCN) of 122 Higher Education Institutions and consumer protection organisations from 29 countries will be concerned with the individual's role as a conscientious consumer. The CCN will provide educators and consumer organisations with useful information by focussing and coordinating research, surveying curriculum provision and identifying common competences.**	**November 2003**		**New**

[73] http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/health_consumer/library/tenders/index_en.html

78sexies European Network in Consumer Education (Life Long Learning – Grundtvig)	**The Consumer Education for Adults-Network (CEA-N) will communicate and provide access to the results of the European and national consumer education initiatives to increase dissemination and to share best practice; improve didactical and methodological materials – link with 78**	**November 2003**		**New**
Support and capacity building of consumer organisations				
Training				
79. Training program for staff members from consumer organisations	-In its first phase (year 2002) the contractor will create training material, select trainers and train them in three different areas: management, public relations and lobbying and EC Consumer law -In its second phase (from beginning of 2003 until end of 2004) the trainers coming out of the first phase will train the staff of consumer organisations in these 3 areas	2002-2004 From beginning of 2003 until end of 2004	The first phase took place in December 2002. 60 persons have been trained in these three areas. Call for tender for the second phase launched on 4 July 2003[74]. The second phase will start from the beginning of 2004 until end of 2008.	4
Review of the legal instrument establishing a general framework for Community activities in favour of consumers				
80. Commission proposal establishing a new general framework for Community activities in favour of consumers	Proposal of a general framework, which will reflect and support the objectives and actions outlined in this strategy, on the basis of which specific projects can be selected and receive Community financial support. It will propose provisions to allow participation of candidate	3rd Q 2002 *Revised timeframe: 1st Q 2003*	Proposal for a Decision establishing a general Framework for financing Community actions in support of consumer policy 2004-2007 adopted on 30/01/03[75], negotiations in Council and EP ongoing. This proposal reflects and supports the objectives of the Consumer Policy Strategy. New Member States	4

[74] http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/health_consumer/library/tenders/index_en.html
[75] COM (2003) 44 final

	countries.		will be integrated into actions provided for under this new financial framework.	
80 bis. Provision of specific technical and legal expertise to consumer organisations	**The Commission Proposal for a Decision establishing a general framework for financing Community actions in support of consumer policy for the years 2004-2007 provides that the Commission may finance specific technical and legal expertise to consumer organisations to support their participation in, and input into, consultation processes on Community legislative and non-legislative policy initiatives, as well as their contribution to market surveillance. Experts would support consumer organisations to better prepare and to improve the quality of their input.**	**2004-2006**	**Calls for tenders will be organised in 2004**	**New**

ACTIONS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF CONSUMER POLICIES

Action	Description	Timeframe	State of play	Assessment
Impact assessment				
81. Commission Communication establishing a comprehensive impact assessment mechanism	Ensuring that the impact on consumers' economic interests (in terms of price, choice, quality, affordability, accessibility and market transparency and fairness) is properly taken into account in relevant legislative and policy initiatives is essential to fulfilling the obligations of Article 153.2. of the Treaty. The development of a comprehensive impact assessment mechanism, as recognised by the White Paper on governance[76] and the Commission Communication on better regulation[77] is therefore essential.	2nd Q 2002 *Revised timeframe: 3Q 2002*	The Communication on Impact Assessment was adopted on 5.6.2002[78].	4
The development of a knowledge-based policy				
82. Organisation of a conference with the Danish Consumer Authority on	This conference would take stock and draw attention to this particular field in statistics	3rd Q 2002 *Revised*	The Conference took place 7-8 November 2002 in Copenhagen[79] and was a successful first step in	4

[76] COM (2001) 428 final
[77] Commission Communication "Simplifying and Improving the regulatory environment", 5 December 2001, COM (2001) 726 final
[78] COM(2002)276
[79] The seminar conclusions can be found at: http://www.eu2002.dk/news/news_read.asp?iInformationID=24599

Consumer policy statistics	(combining both quantitative and qualitative data), highlighting economic consumer detriment studies.	*timeframe: 4th Q 2002*	recognising the need to develop a knowledge-base on consumer policy issues at the EU level. The work started in Copenhagen was continued under Greek Presidency. Orientations for common work have been defined and endorsed by the responsible Ministers during the informal meeting in Eretria (Greece) on 7-8 May 2003.	
83. Continuation of the *Consumers in Europe* publication with Eurostat	Build on the first edition (2001) to develop the publication as a major element of the knowledge base used for consumer policy making.	2002-2006	Call for tender published on 25th September 2003.	\
84. Production of a Eurobarometer survey on consumer information and representation	Produce a Eurobarometer survey to be published for the Consumer Day (15 March 2002) and other surveys of the same kind in the subsequent years	2002-2006	This survey was produced on 15 March 2002 and is available on the Commission website[80]. This type of surveys will be organised on a case by case basis depending on subjects and activities of consumer day.	4
85. Scanner data price surveys for "supermarket goods"	Continue the work done during the pilot phase (covering data 1999-2000) to produce data allowing price comparisons on supermarket goods throughout Europe	2002-2006	New contract was concluded in 2003 ; data are currently processed. Results should be available by the end of 2003	\
86. Surveys on business and consumer attitudes to cross-border trading	Two surveys will analyse business and consumer attitudes to trading and shopping cross-border in the Internal Market.	3rd Quarter 2003	These surveys have been published in November 2002[81].	4
87. Survey on the prices of services, as	If necessary, to conduct complementary	2002-2006	A call for tender on a methodology to gather statistics	\

80 http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/topics/facts_en.htm

81 http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/cons_int/safe_shop/fair_bus_pract/green_pap_comm/studies/index_en.htm

a complement to the regular surveys co-ordinated by Eurostat	surveys on prices of services.		on prices of services has been launched.	
88. Development of more comprehensive information systems and data on the safety of goods and services, building on RAPEX and EHLASS	-Continue and reinforce the collection and assessment of data on product-related injuries and to examine the possible extension to service-related injuries. -Reinforce the operation of the RAPEX system by introducing new operational guidelines and an Internet-based exchange framework. -Complete RAPEX by a framework for the direct exchange of information between market surveillance authorities, as part of the establishment of the Product Safety Network of the General Product Safety Directive.	2002-2006	These actions are mentioned individually above. They are in progress as described.	\
88 bis. Development of indicators on consumer satisfaction	**Develop a methodology for establishing consumer satisfaction indicators in the European Union. This should provide a reference tool for policy makers (and ultimately consumers) to enable them to assess consumer satisfaction levels.**	**2003-2004**	**A call for tender has been launched during the summer 2003.**	**New**
89. Opening of a web-based exchange platform on developing a knowledge base to support consumer policy	**Opening of a CIRCA interest group aimed at public authorities at both European and national level, as well as other relevant actors (researchers, consumer and business organisations, etc.) to foster the development of common work and the exchange of experiences in this domain**	**3rd Quarter 2003 - …**		**New**