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Strengthening consumer rights protection mechanisms

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Bernard MARQUET and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

The problem of protecting consumer rights against the illegal trafficking of fast-moving consumer goods has always existed but, with globalisation, it has taken on a transnational dimension.

Numerous incidents in recent years have shown that owing to the scale of the problem, consumer rights are no longer properly protected. Problems have included food fraud, tobacco smuggling, counterfeit toys, accidents caused by spare parts or sub-standard or counterfeit electrical equipment and fake medicines and cosmetics. This is by no means an exhaustive list.

The Parliamentary Assembly shares fully the concerns of the Committee of Ministers, reflected in the document on the priorities of the programme for 2012-2013, adopted on 16 February 2011 and which, in particular, concerns threats to the Rule of Law. Of these threats, the Committee of Ministers notes, amongst others, organised crime, corruption and the counterfeiting of medical products.

There are two key questions to be answered: What risks do consumers really run? What strategies might be adopted by the authorities of the Council of Europe member states to protect consumer rights more effectively and meet the new challenges of consumer goods' safety given the globalisation of illegal trafficking and its frequent links with corruption?

The Parliamentary Assembly believes that the Council of Europe should investigate the whole issue so that it can draw up and submit recommendations to its member states on ways of preventing violations of consumer rights.

Among the measures it might recommend are the adoption of standard-setting measures in keeping with the new globalised context including a suitable range of punishments; strengthening the supervisory machinery that already exists in law-based states including systems to ensure that fast-moving consumer goods are safe and traceable; enhancing co-operation between member states on the subject and exchanging good practices; making co-operation with other international organisations, particularly the European Union, more effective; and keeping consumers better informed and alerting them to the risks to their well-being and their health.

Signed (see overleaf)



Signed¹:

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
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