

Opinion on the Communications from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on «Identifying and addressing barriers to the Single Market» (COM(2020)93)», «Long term action plan for better implementation and enforcement of single market rules (COM(2020)94)», «A new industrial strategy for Europe (COM(2020)102)» and «An SME strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe (COM(2020)103)»

The Committee on EU Policies of the Chamber of Deputies,

having jointly examined pursuant to Rule 127(1) of the Rules of Procedure the Communications from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on «Identifying and addressing barriers to the Single Market» (COM(2020)93)», «Long term action plan for better implementation and enforcement of single market rules (COM(2020)94)», «A new industrial strategy for Europe (COM(2020)102)» and «An SME strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe (COM(2020)103)»;

whereas:

the Communications being examined anticipate a wide-ranging strategy, which the Commission itself considers a priority within the framework of its work programme, with the goal of improving the integration and functioning of the Single Market, supporting industry in its “green” and digital transformation process, and supporting small- and medium-sized enterprises in this transition while reducing their regulatory burden and facilitating access to financing;

improving the competitiveness of European industry is of crucial importance in the current context and given the grievous setbacks suffered due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic;

considering that:

the improvement of the integration and functioning of the Single Market could generate additional growth in numerous sectors, such as manufacturing and services; nevertheless, there are still barriers that prevent the full exploitation of its potential;

the above-mentioned long term action plan includes measures for, among other things, the better use of instruments used at the pre-litigation stage, including the EU Pilot system, which could profitably be applied to improve the management of conflicts between national legislation and European legislation in the domestic market;

one of the main obstacles to the consolidation of the Single Market concerns the conflict between European legislation and domestic legislation, which can arise when the margin of discretion allowed to domestic legislation is interpreted by Member States as a way to introduce additional measures;

in such cases, Member States often have a tendency to apply the so-called “gold plating”, namely the practice of transposing an excess of norms into national legislation that are not required by European legislation and result in additional burdens, obligations, and procedures;

pointing out that the prohibition of gold plating at domestic level is one of the general principles and guidelines for the transposition of European Union legislation;

noting that:

the new industrial strategy identifies a series of measures and actions to transition European industry towards climate neutrality and digitalization, which steps aim at supporting and strengthening the EU's manufacturing vocation; the decarbonisation of energy-intensive industries is one of the main priorities of the European Commission, which among other things has announced its intention, to this end, to submit a zero-emission steel production strategy;

the new strategy for SMEs calls for the adoption of a set of measures to strengthen their ability to meet the challenges of green and digital transition, reduce the burdens they are subject to, and improve access to financing;

having underscored the need for the present opinion, together with the final document issued by the Committee responsible by subject matter, be forwarded forthwith to the European Parliament, the Council, and the European Commission within the framework of the so-called political dialogue,

expresses a

FAVOURABLE OPINION

with the following qualifications:

a) the Committee responsible by subject matter should consider the possibility of communicating to the competent European authorities the importance of leveraging pre-litigation tools, starting with a re-launch of the EU Pilot procedures, which allow for preliminary dialogue with the Commission in identifying and solving any conflicts between national legislation and European regulations on domestic markets before the initiation of any infringement procedures;

b) the Committee responsible by subject matter should consider the possibility of highlighting actions aimed at improving the transposition, implementation, and enforcement of European legislation within the framework of structured dialogue between the Commission and Member States before the adoption of national transposition laws, in part to ensure compliance with the prohibition of gold plating, thus preventing additional burdens being placed on economic operators;

c) the Committee responsible by subject matter should also consider the possibility of communicating to the competent European authorities the need to support, with adequate funding, programmes specifically aimed at small- and medium-sized enterprises to promote their technological innovation and conversion with a view to climate neutrality and digitalization. To this end, the rationalization and simplification of burdens is of strategic importance, along with improved access to measures and instruments for the financing and capitalization of SMEs.