



efc briefing

third sector

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Commissioner-designate announces plans to work on European Foundation Statute

Outline

Strengthening the opportunities and protection that the internal market offers citizens, consumers and businesses was the key message of Michel Barnier, commissioner-designate for the internal market and services, who presented his priorities during a hearing at the European Parliament on 13 January 2010.

"The efficiency of the markets must be put at the service of human progress and not the opposite," he noted. He emphasised his intention of restoring citizens' faith in the European project and the need "to put back at the heart of the internal market those who live it on a daily basis: the citizens, consumers and businesses".

In practice this means that he will consider a series of new initiatives, among which giving foundations and philanthropic bodies a European Statute. He will also look at the possibility of a social business act, to promote businesses which also attempt to fight against social exclusion. He highlighted the need to build a secure internet framework for consumers, and to ensure that citizens' professional qualifications are recognised in other EU countries. The internal market should also enable citizens to access affordable quality services and goods.

Other key areas of work addressed at the hearing were the following:

- Promoting creation and innovation: The focus will be on adapting the protection of copy rights to the internet age, completing negotiations on the draft legislation for a European patent, and the fight against counterfeiting.
- Strengthening the internal market: The commissioner-designate stressed the need to ensure that the internal market plays its role in creating new sustainable growth, with a focus on better regulation and on removing obstacles for businesses, in particular SMEs, the retail sector, the implementation of the services Directive, but also on the role of public procurement and the development of employee ownership. Transparency within corporate governance will also be under review. Finally Mr Barnier gave his views on better regulating the financial services sector saying that "we must learn lessons from the crisis and we are going to learn. It is in the interest of Europe's financial sector to be regulated smartly and efficiently".

Hearings of the 26 Commissioners-designate will conclude on 19 January. The European Parliament is to vote the team proposed by EC President José Manuel Barroso on 26 January which will start work in February.