

Consumer rights: Chambers demand an impact assessment on Parliament's 'mixed harmonisation' proposal

European Chambers today called for the European Parliament to halt discussions on Alexander Schwab's draft report on the Consumer Rights Directive until the implications of its radical changes to the Commission proposal are carefully assessed.

Chambers have supported the Commission's original proposal, which would reduce the many barriers in the internal market created by fragmented consumer protection rules. They are now concerned that MEP Schwab's proposal of mixed harmonisation, while politically expedient, may in fact do little to simplify the legal framework for consumer contracts.

EUROCHAMBRES' Secretary General, Arnaldo Abruzzini, said: *"Schwab is proposing a significant departure from the Commission's full harmonisation proposal that Chambers – and indeed the Parliament – still have to evaluate. At first glance, it looks like it could oblige businesses across Europe to change their contract terms, but not in a uniform way. The advantages of this approach are unclear and may therefore be hard to sell to our members."*

Mr Abruzzini continued: *"Changing contract law is not an exact science, but it's nonetheless alarming from a business perspective that the costs and benefits of the hugely significant changes proposed by the rapporteur have not been quantified. We now look to the Parliament to instigate a thorough impact assessment of Mr Schwab's proposal – something the rapporteur himself recommended a few months ago – before the report progresses any further."*

Further information: Mr Ben Butters, Tel. +32 2 282 08 71, butters@eurochambres.eu
Press contact: Ms Guendalina Cominotti, Tel. +32 2 282 08 66, cominotti@eurochambres.eu
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