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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth (Internal Market – SMCP)
Subject:	Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing the Single Market and Customs Programme for the period 2028-2034 and repealing Regulations (EU) 2021/444, (EU) 2021/690, (EU) 2021/785, (EU) 2021/847 and (EU) 2021/1077 - Comments on 12486/25 by AT, BE, DE, ES, FI, GR, IT, NL, PL, PT and SK

First General Written Comments by AUSTRIA on the Proposal for a Regulation establishing the Single Market and Customs Programme (SMCP)

24/09/2025

PUBLIC

Austria would like to thank the Presidency for the possibility to submit first written comments on the Regulation establishing the Single Market and Customs Programme (SMCP).

General

Austria places a **general scrutiny reservation** at this stage, pending the completion of its national coordination process.

Austria **supports the overall objective of the SMCP to create synergies and simplify administrative procedures.** At the same time, it is noted that the focus of the programme remains very strongly on IT projects, while new substantive elements are only limited. For Austria, it is essential that there are **no substantive reductions in the existing customs agendas**. Open questions also remain regarding the **concrete set-up of the planned Customs Authority and the Customs Data Hub**, on which Austria would welcome further information.

On Fiscalis

Austria considers it indispensable that Fiscalis strand be safeguarded within the SMCP.
Should the continuation of a stand-alone Fiscalis Programme not be possible, Austria stresses that **Fiscalis activities within the SMCP must be provided with a clearly earmarked and secured budget.** Only in this way can the indispensable IT systems and cooperation measures for the tax administrations continue to be supported on a stable basis. The full continuation of the current tasks and activities of Fiscalis, even if they are placed under a new programme umbrella, is of utmost importance. Any reduction of these activities would directly undermine tax cooperation in the EU and, consequently, the integrity of the internal market. Austria will therefore, in the course of the negotiations, pay particular attention to budget transparency and to the unaltered continuation of Fiscalis activities.

On the SMCP Annex concerning the European Statistical System

Austria underlines that the availability of high-quality European statistics is a central strategic

goal, as statistics are an essential tool for all user groups. Against this background, a comprehensive **reflection of the strategic objectives of the European Statistical System in the SMCP** is of particular importance. The proposed annex appears very limited. Priorities contained in the Common Position are to a large extent only briefly reflected. Austria suggests including a more **complete presentation of the strategic priorities of the Common Position in the annex**. For reference, Annex II of the Single Market Programme 2021–2027 (Regulation (EU) 2021/690) described the objectives of European statistics in a more structured manner, listing under headings the specific thematic areas where statistical descriptions were required. Austria suggests that the SMCP annex should be structured and enriched in a similar way.

On lessons learned from predecessor programmes

Austria recalls the reference in the Explanatory Memorandum (page 13, footnote 40) that the SMCP should build on findings and lessons learned from evaluations of its predecessor programmes. One of these is the Single Market Programme 2021–2027 (Regulation (EU) 2021/690). Austria notes that the **interim evaluation of this Regulation has not yet been published.** Austria will only be able to assess whether the SMCP proposal adequately takes this evaluation into account once it becomes available. Austria therefore asks: when will the interim evaluation of Regulation (EU) 2021/690 be published? Why has the Single Market Programme 2021–2027 only "partially delivered on the flexibilities and synergies expected from designing an integrated programme"? And how does the SMCP proposal remedy this partial delivery, given that SMP 2021–2027 is one of its direct predecessors?

On governance and work programmes

Austria would also appreciate clarifications regarding Articles 8 (Implementation and forms of Union funding) and 11 (Work programmes). In particular, Austria would ask which options exist for the Union legislator to ensure that Member State involvement in the implementation of the SMCP provides at least the same level of say for Member States as under Regulation (EU) 2021/690. Austria further asks what prompted the Commission in its SMCP proposal to economise on Member State control of implementing powers conferred on the Commission and on Council control of delegated powers. Finally, Austria would welcome the assessment of the Council Legal Service on how Member State involvement in the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2021/690 compares to the design foreseen under the SMCP proposal.

KINGDOM OF BELGIUM
Federal Public Service
**Foreign Affairs,
Foreign Trade and
Development Cooperation**

Permanent Representation of Belgium to the EU

PUBLIC

Subject: Single Market and Customs Programme – Belgian questions

Dear Presidency,

Please find below Belgium's questions concerning the Single Market and Customs Programme. At this stage, we maintain a scrutiny reservation on the entire text

Q1: The current SMP programme contains a whole chapter IV on the implementation of the programme and elaborates on the procedure to adopt the work programmes. Could the Commission provide some information on this difference and explain how the work programmes will be adopted under the new framework?

Q2: How will the actions included in the Single Market Strategy be financed?

Q3: The explanatory memorandum states that SMEs are not covered, but there is no reference to the European Competitiveness Fund. Could the Commission elaborate on this?

Q4: With regard to the CRMA and IMERA, does the programme only target the implementation of digital tools or does it cover other aspects of the implementation of these instruments? Furthermore, there's no reference to the Forced Labour regulation. Which financial instrument covers its implementation?

First written comments Germany regarding the Proposal for a Regulation establishing the Single Market and Customs Programme for the period 2028-2034

PUBLIC

We would like to thank the European Commission for the presentation of the Proposal for a new Single Market and Customs Programme and the opportunity for first written comments.

As already stated, Germany has a fundamental scrutiny reservation.

Strengthening the competitiveness and resilience of the single market is of key importance not least in the face of current geopolitical challenges. Therefore, DEU welcomes the general objectives to enhance and deepen the functioning of the single market i.a. by removing barriers, facilitate collaboration with and between MS and promote the implementation and enforcement of rules. At the same time, it is important to look at the internal market in the context of these geopolitical challenges and to align internal market policies accordingly.

Germany welcomes in principle the merging of programmes under direct management. Since the proposed volume of the new MFF is too high and the Single Market and Customs Programme is part of the new MFF, horizontal cuts are necessary. The actual level of proposed budgets or contributions from the Union budget from 2028 onward will therefore depend on the outcome of the negotiations on the MFF 2028–2034.

Our customs authorities have specific tasks, particularly in the fiscal field but also regarding non-fiscal regulations. In Germany customs are not responsible for market surveillance but only contribute to non-fiscal aims (in cooperation with market surveillance authorities). The organisation of the customs administration is a matter of the Member States. We reject any possible further extension of the current customs competences, it is not compatible with Germany’s differentiation between market surveillance and customs authorities as well as its federal organisation. This must also be reflected in the Regulation, including in the Programme Objectives (Article 3). In view of the ongoing discussion on the Customs Reform proposal, possibilities should be kept open.

As a general remark on the proposal, the whole programme should be limited to the duration of the next MFF, which should be specified in Article 1.

Proposals in the field of e-commerce

Germany welcomes the Commission's efforts to address the challenges in e-commerce in order to create a level playing field for businesses and protect consumers.

We support the objective of strengthening market surveillance at EU level. Could the Commission clarify its intention to create competences regarding market surveillance in some strategic priority areas at EU level? What would the role and competence of a possible EU market surveillance authority be?

The proposal for a Regulation refers to the customs administrations as effectively the lead authorities for the control of goods entering the Single Market at the EU's external borders (Context of the proposal, p. 2). According to the draft, customs authorities should ensure effective control of goods at the EU's external borders. In doing so, they are to contribute to effective market surveillance and a high level of consumer protection, product conformity and product safety (Article 3(2)(d)). How is this to be understood?

Especially considering that the customs authorities of some MS (like in Germany) are not responsible for market surveillance (but only for the suspension of the goods). Article 3(2)(d) needs to be adapted accordingly. What is the envisioned relationship between the tasks of customs and market surveillance authorities?

IMERA Regulation

Regarding the listing of IMERA on page 19 of the COM proposal under digital Germany would be grateful for further clarification: What costs are included? Should this be the cost of the Commission’s newly planned tool? Is there an interface to IMI planned for the communication especially within the Member States?

For reasons of cost and simplification, Germany is also in favour of linking the digital tool to the existing Internal Market Information System (IMI).

Customs programme

Regarding the mandate of the customs authorities:

The tasks of customs in the Member States and in the Customs Union are clearly defined or will be clearly defined when reforming the Union Customs Code. **Article 3 (1) and (2)(d)** and **recitals (14), (23)** should be amended accordingly and aligned

more closely with the defined customs tasks. Customs cannot be seen as a general authority to address all difficulties that arise with respect to the internal market and that are mentioned in the regulation.

Regarding the distinction of the support for customs authorities from other policy areas under the Regulation:

We welcome the fact that, according to **recital (26)**, the Customs programme including customs control equipment support interventions will be continued with regard to its specific objectives. These objectives should be incorporated into the text of the regulation **Article 3 (1) and (2)(d)**.

How should the budget for customs (43.6% of the total volume of the proposal of the Regulation) be distinguished from the budget of the other policy areas of the Regulation? How should the specific customs tasks from the customs programme be reflected in the legal text? The budget is important for the targeted digital solutions for the Customs Union (particularly in the context of the reform of the Union Customs Code and the 70 customs IT systems mentioned in the text, see p. 5) as well as for capacity building and cooperation with EU member states and EU candidate countries.

Programming framework for European statistics

We welcome the Programming framework for European statistics proposed by the Commission. However, Germany still would have wished for a separate Regulation for the European Statistical Programme (ESP) as has always been the case in the the years before the start of the Single Market Programme currently in place. Based on the experience of the last years, the integration of official statistics into the Single Market doesn't strengthen the European statistics.

As already stated by Germany in the context of the ESS common position on the future and strategic priorities of European statistics, new data requirements should be closely aligned with EU policies. Data needs should only be considered if they actually and effectively contribute to the management of EU policy in a clear and transparent way. We should also set our focus on reducing burden on Statistical Offices and respondents. Against the background of the present societal and economic situation and the resulting challenges also for Official Statistics we see the necessity for the area of Statistics of concentrating on the most elemental statistical actions and possibly laying the stress on consolidation and focus setting

Germany will take detailed position in the course of the further negotiations, especially in the discussions of the relevant Annex 1. We would like to mention already now, that a possible expansion of coverage and granularity must have a clear legal basis. The national statistical systems need planning reliability and transparency to meet emerging data needs and to enable coordination with the data producers at national level.

PUBLIC

Proposal of a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Single Market and Customs Programme for the period 2028-2034

COMMENTS FROM SPAIN

PUBLIC

- By the present ES communicate to the PRES a general study reservation to the whole proposal, as ES needs time to make the appropriate consultations with the different Departments involved in the matters addressed in the Single Market and Customs Programme 2028-2024 (SMCP).

- On a preliminary basis, ES is interested on knowing in detail the continuity of the activities carried out under the current Internal Market, Customs, Fiscalis and Anti-Froud Programmes in the next SMCP 2028-2034.

  In this sense, ES request, in the line of the PT proposal, a clear table in which are detailed the current programmes activities and financing and the activities and financing envisaged for these activities in the next SMCP.

  In particular ES is interested on knowing the way in which the empowerment of SMEs in the Internal Market is envisaged (which counted with a financing of 1.000M€ under the current programme and however does not appear as an activity in the next SMCP, being for the time being a vague reference under the European Competitivity Fund), the financing and activities in order to support IM resilience in case of crisis (the continuity of the pillar on human, animal and plant security in case of plagues and pandemies under art. 3.2.e) of the current Internal Market Programme and other support measures to handle future crisis such as IMERA) and the way in which is ensured the financing of activities and initiatives envisaged in the Customs Reform, in particular the proper financing of the Customs Data Hub.

- Besides, ES would like further clarifications on the mechanisms of governance of the SMCP and the way to ensure the follow up by Member States of the programme implementation. In particular ES is interested on knowing the mechanisms to redistribute the estimated Budget of activities of the different components and annexes of the programme in order to adapt to new circumstances and unforeseen crises, MS participation on the design of Annual and Pluriannual Programmes and comitology mechanisms present in the current IM and Customs Programmes which do not appear in the proposal of SMCP.

- ES would like, as well, to express its concerns regarding the inclusion of the European Statistical Programme (ESP) as an annex of the Single Market and Customs Programme. ES believes that this inclusion in the Anex jeopardizes the statistical task and make more difficult to address the specialities foreseen in the statistical legislation along the legal text. The flexibility of moving the financial allocation from one programme to other does not necessarily plays in favour of the ESS, it could happen even the contrary, that the budget foreseen for the ESP could be used to finance instead other policies.

- With regard to this Annex, being the ESP is the main instrument for the production of European Statistics, as stated in article 13 of Regulation 223, the Annex shall set out the main fields and the objectives of the actions and shall lay down priorities concerning the needs for information. Those needs shall be weighed against the resources needed at Community and national level. Therefore, from the ES point of view, the “draft annex of the Programming framework for European statistics” should be aligned with the published “ESS common position on the future and strategic priorities of European statistics” and should incorporate all the actions detailed in the position paper which will be shared as drafting proposals before the 20th of October.

PUBLIC

Written Comments from Finland on the proposal for the Single Market and Customs Programme, 25 September 2025

Documents: ST 12554/25, ST 12486/25 ADD1-3 +ADD4 REV1

This paper includes *Finnish preliminary views* on the proposal as our decision-making process is unfinished. Please see below questions, general comments and sector-specific comments on the proposal.

We thank the Commission for the proposal and also the Presidency for its goal of discussing the matter carefully and comprehensively in the Council working party during autumn 2025.

General Comments

- **Finland supports the Commission's proposal to reduce the number of headings and funding programmes in the financial framework by combining policy sectors and programmes into larger entities in order to better respond to changing situations and achieve synergies.**

- **Finland emphasises that simplification must also extend to implementation while avoiding the administrative burden.**

- **However, it is important to find an adequate balance between flexibility, predictability and rigorous budgeting.**

- **Finland welcomes flexibility also in the Single Market and Customs programme but stresses the importance to ensure effective implementation, better cross-sectoral coordination across policy areas, better implementation and monitoring of the programme and simplified access to finance for beneficiaries.**

- **On the basis of the impact assessment, Finland considers it remains unclear how the proposal will ensure better cross-sectoral coordination, enforcement and more effective monitoring of the programme. Could the Commission indicate how these objectives are taken into account in the Single Market and Customs Programme?**

- **The Customs Union has an important role to play in safeguarding the proper functioning of the EU's Single Market. Finland supports the objective of the Single Market and Customs Programme to strengthen the Customs Union and ensure its high performance and proper implementation of the Customs reform.**

- **The Commission proposes a substantial increase to the budget of the Single Market and Customs Programme, compared to the current programmes. The budget of the programme must be assessed in connection with the MFF as a whole.**

Questions regarding sectorial pillars and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme

- **The current programmes include quite detailed rules concerning the implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Could the Commission elaborate, how such rules would be taken into account in the future? Can we expect more detailed regulation on the monitoring and evaluation of Single Market and Customs Programme?**

- **The Article 4 of the proposal includes a budgetary framework for the whole programme. The current Single Market Programme, on the other hand, also has indicative budgets for the different sub-programmes or pillars in the Article on Budget. In addition, there are separate programmes, too, such as the Fiscalis and Anti-Fraud programmes. In connection with the proposal for the SMCP, the Commission has published the ´Legislative Financial and Digital Statement´, which presents the estimated financial impact of the proposal on applications in different sectors within the SMCP. Would it be possible to attach such an assessment as an Annex to the Regulation, even if it were not binding?**

- **Why has the regulation itself not defined different measures or sub-areas and their funding contributions? In the impact assessment, there is only a list of upper-level measures and their funding.**

Questions on co-financing rules

- **The proposal does not include an article on co-financing that currently is included in the Single Market Programme. What would be the share of EU funding (co-financing rate) in measures by the Member States? What would be the maximum contribution and on what basis is it determined? Would measures by Member States always include self-financing, too?**

Questions on management of the SMCP and allocation annual funding

- **How would the Commission manage the Single Market and Customs programme? Which Directorate-General will be responsible for the implementation? Where would the authorising officer be? Who is responsible for measures protecting the Union's financial interests?**

- **How will the annual budget be planned and implemented? On what basis and how will annual funding inside SMCP be allocated?**

- **How much of the programme's funding will be used for administrative expenses of the EU institutions and agencies (= for administrative expenditure)?**

Questions about the structure of the programme and the actions to be funded compared to the current programmes:

- **The proposed SMCP programme would integrate the two current Customs programmes, ie. the Customs Programme and the Customs Control Equipment Instrument (CCEI). Does the new programme mean a change in the financing of customs activities compared to the current situation, and if so, what would be the most significant changes?**

- **The Current Customs Control Equipment Instrument (CCEI) specifically provides financial support to the customs authorities of European Union Member States for the transparent purchase, maintenance and upgrade of customs control equipment. Will the purpose of use remain exactly the same in SMCP?**

- **Questions on the "Legislative financial and digital statement" of the proposal: What exactly is meant by:**

- **"supporting the acquisition of the customs control equipment in the enlargement countries (and for addressing crisis situations)"** *(Paragraph 1.5.2. Added value of EU involvement)*
- **and "in particular in case of crisis situations in the countries neighbouring the Union's external borders"** *(Paragraph 1.5.3. Lessons learned from similar experiences in the past and recital 26)***?**

- **Can we expect more detailed regulation on the eligibility of customs control equipment?**
- **Will the current Customs Control Equipment Instrument be wholly included in the new Customs section?**
- **How can one ensure that there are no overlaps between Customs and Anti-Fraud measures? For example, as regards providing tools and support for operational activities?**

Questions on the Anti-Fraud measures:

- **The definition in Article 3 (2) (e) may be unnecessarily extensive. What measures, more specifically, are included in the anti-fraud measures? Should these anti-fraud activities be defined more in detail in the Regulation?**

- **Which information systems will be financed by the Commission in the future from the programme? (Currently AFIS and IMS are funded from the Anti-Fraud programme.)**

- **Based on the impact assessment, funding for the anti-Fraud measures would be approximately doubled. What additional needs would additional funding cover?**

Questions on European statistics:

- Recital 15: We propose to add: … with regard the respect for statistical principles **and professional independence**, as well as the functioning of the European statistical system…..
    - Justification: The professional independence of statistical authorities is enacted in the Regulation on European statistics (EC) 223/2009. In the current SMP-regulation, it is mentioned in recital (6). We propose to retain that also in the SMCP as this right is fundamental for the sake of objectivity and credibility of European statistics.

- **Why does the proposed regulation lack the comitology procedure?**
- **In what ways does the new programme differ from the previous programmes, that comitology is not needed anymore?**
- **How will the work programmes be prepared and approved under the new SMCP programme and regulation?**
- **Why does the proposed regulation not list eligible activities or actions at all?**
- **Will articles concerning monitoring, evaluation and reporting be added at a later stage to the proposed regulation?**

PUBLIC

GREECE
PRELIMINARY WRITTEN COMMENTS ON SMCP PROPOSAL
26.09.2025

PUBLIC

Following the call for initial written questions or comments in advance of the working party meetings on 3 and 17 October 2025 regarding Single Market and Customs Programme (COM(2025)590/03.09.2025), we would like to share with the Presidency and the other Member States the following questions/comments in order to facilitate our discussions:

At this stage, we have a **general scrutiny reservation for the whole text**, and we have only preliminary comments. We need to provide sufficient time for the negotiations at technical level, and prioritize quality over speed.

More specifically:

1) We are concerned, and we have scrutiny reservation about the **lack of participation of Member States in the governance** of the SMCP. The SMCP must be equipped with clear governance mechanisms, transparent decision-making procedures, and strong monitoring to avoid overlaps, ensure coherence, and guarantee alignment with the Union's long-term strategic objectives. We have a scrutiny reservation on article 11.

2) We believe that we should **further specify the provisions on programme objectives in the primary legislation**, in order to sufficiently frame the scope and context of the work programmes, and ensure legal clarity and predictability. We have a scrutiny reservation on article 3.

3) In which ways the SMCP will support the implementation of **IMERA**?

4) We would like to clarify whether the implementation of the Regulation (EU) 2024/3015 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2024 on prohibiting products made with forced labour on the Union market and amending Directive (EU) 2019/1937 is included in the **scope** of the SMCP?

5) We would like to **ask from the Commission to provide us with a mapping table** that matches the objectives of the current Single Market Programme as well as the other EU funding streams with the objectives of SMCP?

6) We need to have in place adequate safeguards for the participation of **third country entities**. We have a scrutiny reservation on the provisions of article 7.

7) We would like further clarifications on the **types of actions that are eligible on SMCP** in order to achieve the specific objectives. How are these reflected in the provisions of the proposed regulation? We have a scrutiny reservation on article 9.

You can share our comments to the other Member States and you can upload them in the delegates' portal.

Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri
Dipartimento per gli Affari Europei
UFFICIO PER IL MERCATO INTERNO E LA COMPETITIVITA'

PUBLIC

Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Single Market and Customs Programme for the period 2028-2034 and repealing Regulations (EU) 2021/444, (EU) 2021/690, (EU) 2021/785, (EU) 2021/847 and (EU) 2021/1077

IT written comments

L'Italia ha una riserva d'esame sulla proposta di regolamento in oggetto. Le considerazioni qui condivise hanno dunque carattere parziale e preliminare, essendo ancora in corso la consultazione nazionale con le amministrazioni competenti.

Condividiamo gli obiettivi della Commissione tesi a favorire maggiore flessibilità, semplificazione e sinergia tra i diversi strumenti, attraverso l'accorpamento in un unico Programma.

Apprezziamo la volontà di rafforzare la sinergia tra le politiche di rafforzamento del mercato unico e dell'Unione doganale. L'eliminazione delle barriere interne non può che essere accompagnata da un rafforzamento del **sistema di vigilanza** del mercato e dei **controlli alle frontiere esterne** al fine di ottenere un'uniforme applicazione della normativa unionale in tutti gli Stati membri per consolidare sempre più la tutela del commercio e dei traffici leali ed ovviare ad una distorsione delle transazioni in un contesto di effettiva parità di condizione. Tutte queste misure necessitano di politiche che definiscano obiettivi chiari e di adeguato sostegno finanziario e tecnico conseguente alla complessità e all'ampiezza dei compiti a cui sono chiamate oggi le autorità nazionale di controllo, anche a seguito dell'affermarsi dell'e-commerce.

Riteniamo necessari chiarimenti in relazione ad alcuni profili della proposta. La proposta prevede un budget unitario di circa 6 miliardi di euro per il periodo 2028–2034, con la logica della *"unified option"* e dotazioni indicative per ciascuna policy area. In tale contesto, si ritiene opportuno chiarire il grado di vincolatività degli importi previsti e se tali risorse siano garantite o soggette a possibili riallocazioni in caso di emergenze o priorità emergenti.

Ricordiamo inoltre la nostra richiesta di una «nota tecnica» con prove delle effettive assegnazioni finanziarie del nuovo programma, suddivise per singole voci di bilancio, comprese quelle aggiunte e quelle separate, a prezzi costanti, comparabili a quelli dei programmi attuali, tenendo conto dell'inflazione (su cui la Commissione ha gentilmente acconsentito durante il gruppo di lavoro).

Vorremmo ottenere maggiori dettagli, anche con prove tratte dalla valutazione d'impatto, sulla misura in cui il modello di governance proposto, che esclude la procedura di comitatologia, prevede un'adeguata partecipazione degli Stati membri alla definizione dei programmi di lavoro e alle decisioni relative all'assegnazione e alla riassegnazione delle risorse alle diverse azioni.

Al contempo avanziamo alcune preoccupazioni per le ricadute in fase di attuazione della scelta effettuata dall'esecutivo europeo. In particolare, la preferenza espressa per il c.d. Unified

Scenario, rispetto all'alternativo Integrated Scenario, fa paventare una gestione nazionale complessa e potenzialmente farraginosa, con ricadute significative in termini di coordinamento interistituzionale e operatività.

Con riferimento alle azioni che dovrebbero essere supportate per il tramite del SMCP, riteniamo la proposta rifletta molte delle richieste rappresentate dall'Italia nel proprio documento di posizione relativo alla Strategia per il mercato unico. Con esso l'Italia rappresentava l'esigenza di prevedere una serie di azioni intese a rafforzare l'attuazione delle normative sul mercato unico, in particolare con riferimento all'esigenza di maggiori risorse, di coordinamento, di formazione, di utilizzo degli strumenti digitali, di scambio dei dati e ottimizzazione e integrazione delle piattaforme europee di comunicazione e informazione.

Apprezziamo l'attenzione posta sulla standardizzazione che consideriamo una leva strategica per migliorare l'efficienza del mercato unico. La competitività, la sovranità tecnologica e la capacità dell'Europa di ridurre le proprie dipendenze, così come la protezione dei valori dell'Unione, tra cui le ambizioni sociali e ambientali, dipenderanno dalla misura in cui le istituzioni UE riusciranno ad imporsi nel campo della normazione a livello internazionale. A tal fine non basta disporre di solide competenze in materia di normazione nell'industria, ma è altresì necessario che la normazione europea divenga più agile, flessibile e mirata, così da individuare in anticipo le esigenze di normazione.

Condividiamo l'obiettivo di rafforzare gli strumenti digitali, ivi inclusi SOLVIT, IMI e gli strumenti di identità digitale. Si rileva che il Programma dovrebbe finanziare il mantenimento e l'aggiornamento di numerosi sistemi IT. Sebbene la proposta elenchi alcuni sistemi già operativi e altri da implementare, l'elenco appare indicativo e non esaustivo. Non emergono, inoltre, informazioni puntuali sui costi effettivi di ciascun progetto digitale. Si ritiene pertanto necessario disporre di maggiori dettagli, anche solo indicativi, sui costi preventivati per i progetti elencati e per quelli già esistenti ma non menzionati.

Courtesy translation - EN

Italy has a scrutiny reservation on the proposed regulation in question. The considerations shared here are therefore partial and preliminary, as national consultations with the relevant administrations are still ongoing.

We share the Commission's objectives of promoting greater flexibility, simplification, and synergy between the various instruments by combining them into a single program.

We appreciate the desire to strengthen the synergy between policies aimed at strengthening the single market and the customs union. The elimination of internal barriers must be accompanied by a strengthening of the market surveillance system and external border controls in order to achieve uniform application of EU legislation in all Member States, thereby further consolidating the protection of fair trade and commerce and preventing distortion of transactions in a context of effective equality of conditions. All these measures require policies that define clear objectives and adequate financial and technical support, given the complexity and scope of the tasks that national control authorities are now called upon to perform, not least as a result of the rise of e-commerce.

We believe that clarification is needed on certain aspects of the proposal. The proposal provides for a single budget of approximately €6 billion for the period 2028–2034, based on the 'unified option' approach and indicative allocations for each policy area. In this context, we believe it is necessary to clarify the degree of binding nature of the amounts provided for, and whether

these resources are guaranteed or subject to possible reallocation in the event of emergencies or emerging priorities.

We would also like to reiterate our request for a “technical note” with evidence of the actual financial allocations for the new program, broken down by individual budget items, including those that have been added and those that have been separated, at constant prices comparable to those of the current programs, taking inflation into account (which the Commission kindly agreed to during the working group).

We would like more details, including evidence from the impact assessment, on the extent to which the proposed governance model, which excludes the comitology procedure, provides for adequate participation by Member States in the definition of work programs and decisions on the allocation and reallocation of resources to different actions.

At the same time, we express some concerns about the repercussions of the European executive's decision during the implementation phase. In particular, the preference expressed for the so-called Unified Scenario, as opposed to the alternative Integrated Scenario, raises fears of complex and potentially cumbersome national management, with significant repercussions in terms of interinstitutional coordination and operational efficiency.

With regard to the actions that should be supported through the SMCP, we believe that the proposal reflects many of the requests made by Italy in its position paper on the Single Market Strategy. In this document, Italy expressed the need to provide for a series of actions aimed at strengthening the implementation of single market regulations, with particular reference to the need for greater resources, coordination, training, use of digital tools, data exchange, and optimization and integration of European communication and information platforms.

We appreciate the focus on standardization, which we consider a strategic lever for improving the efficiency of the single market. Europe's competitiveness, technological sovereignty, and ability to reduce its dependencies, as well as the protection of the Union's values, including its social and environmental ambitions, will depend on the extent to which the EU institutions succeed in asserting themselves in the field of international standardization. To this end, it is not enough to have strong standardization expertise in industry; European standardization must also become more agile, flexible, and targeted, so that standardization needs can be identified in advance.

We share the objective of strengthening digital tools, including SOLVIT, IMI, and digital identity tools. It should be noted that the Program is expected to finance the maintenance and updating of numerous IT systems. Although the proposal lists some systems that are already operational and others that are to be implemented, the list appears to be indicative and not exhaustive. Furthermore, there is no specific information on the actual costs of each digital project. We therefore consider it necessary to have more details, even if only indicative, on the estimated costs for the projects listed and for those that already exist but are not mentioned.

Single Market and Customs Programme (SMCP) – NL written questions / comments

At the upcoming working party meetings on 3 and 17 October, we are planning an article by-article examination of the proposal. Member States are invited to send written questions or comments in advance. Please send them by 25 September.

PUBLIC

General questions:	1. How is strengthening the competitiveness and sustainability of SMEs ensured within the European Competitiveness Fund, especially since it is proposed that the SME strand in the current Single Market Programme is moved to the ECF? 2. How will this Programme be monitored, reported on and evaluated, especially with the proposal to integrate five current programmes?
Recitals:	-
Article 1, *Subject matter*:	3. Why are the objectives of the Programme not elaborated on, as it was in Article 1 in Regulation (EU) 2021/690? (*"for improving the functioning of the internal market..."*)
Article 2, *Definitions*:	4. Article 2(8) could be textual aligned with (9): *'market surveillance' means market surveillance as defined in Article 3, point (3), of Regulation (EU) 2019/1020;* 5. Article 2(9) has the incorrect reference to Regulation (EU) 2019/1020: this should be Article 3, point (4), not Article 3, point (1). 6. Article 2(7) has the incorrect enumeration: it goes from (a) (b) back to (a) and then (d). This should be (a), (b), (c), (d).
Article 3, *Programme objectives*:	7. Why are the general objectives of the Programme not further elaborated on, as it was in Article 3(1) in Regulation (EU) 2021/690? 8. Specifically: why is European statistics not included as a general objective as it was in Article 3(1)(b) in Regulation (EU) 2021/690? 9. Why is the prevention and removal of Single Market obstacles, the implementation and enforcement of Union law in the area of the Single Market, and effective market surveillance not included in Article 3(2)(a), as it was in Article 3(2)(a)(i) and (ii) in Regulation (EU) 2021/690? 10. Could you please elaborate on the difference between *"economic operators"* and *"businesses"* in Article 3(2)(a)? 11. Could you please elaborate on the underlying thoughts and plans regarding the specific objective in Article 3(2)(b) and (f). 12. Why are the specific objectives in respect of consumers (as in Article 3(2)(d) in Regulation (EU) 2021/690) merged with the specific objectives for the Single Market in Article 3(2)(a)? 13. Why is ensuring the participation of relevant stakeholders in setting up European standards (as in Article 3(2)(c)(i) in Regulation (EU) 2021/690) not included in Article (3)(2)(c)?
Article 4, *Budget*:	14. What does *"indicative"* mean in relation to the financial envelope in Article 4(1)?

	15. Will the amount referred to in Article 4(1) also be allocated to specific objectives, as in Article 4(2) in Regulation (EU) 2021/690? 16. To what extend is it possible to 'earmark' the budgets of the different programs? E.g. exceeding the budget of one programme should not lead to cuts in the budgets of other programmes. 17. What is meant with *"communication and visibility activities, including corporate communication on the political priorities of the Union"* in Article 4(4)? Is this related to the information, communication and publicity requirements in Article 22 in Regulation (EU) 2021/690? 18. What is the maximum total costs of technical and administrative assistance in Article 4(4)? In Regulation (EU) 2021/690, the total costs of this assistance could not exceed 5% of the value of the financial envelope mentioned in (1). 19. How is prevented that programmes are unable to achieve their objectives and projects due to the flexibility of the budgets? 20. The proposed budget for Customs is € 2722 million: how will this amount be shielded from other parts and budgets in the Programme? 21. How will the Customs budget be allocated amongst the different subjects within the Customs objectives? 22. How will the general Internal Market budget (€ 1107 million) within the larger Single Market (€ 2678 million) budget be allocated amongst the different objectives? 23. What are the foreseen consequences of integrating the currently separate allocated budgets for market surveillance, standardization and internal market into a broader Internal Market budget? 24. Could you please elaborate on the concrete underlying calculations for building the EU Customs Datahub and the EU Customs Authority with its foreseen three 'pillars'/areas of responsibility: management of the datahub, risk management and operational cooperation (as a follow up of the work started right now under the umbrella of EUCAB).
Article 5, *Additional resources*:	-
Article 6, *Alternative, combined and cumulative funding*:	25. Could cumulative and alternative financing lead to covering the same costs? This was specifically prevented in Article 14(1) in Regulation (EU) 2021/690.
Article 7, *Third countries associated to the programme*:	-
Article 8, *Implementation and forms of Union funding*:	-
Article 9, *Eligibility*:	26. Why are the eligible actions of the Programme not further elaborated on, as it was in Article 8 in Regulation (EU) 2021/690?

	27. The reference to Article 3 is missing in Article 9(2)(d).
Article 10, *Entities eligible without a call for proposals*:	28. Could you please elaborate on the inclusion of the authorities of the Member States in Article 10(4).
Article 11, *Work programme*:	29. How will the work programmes specifically be implemented and adopted? What will be the role of member states in this process?
Article 12, *Repeal*:	-
Article 13, *Transitional provisions*:	-
Article 14, *Entry into force and application*:	-
Annex:	30. Could you please elaborate on the programming framework for European statistics, in particular on whether and how the proposed structure complies with the provisions regarding the European Statistical Programme as laid down in Regulation (EC) No. 223/2009 on European Statistics?
Impact assessment:	31. The IA mentions the risks of disruption of long-established and essential activities, low uptake of horizontal activities, adjustment costs, duplication or confusion between activities, inflexibility when uniform rules prove unsuitable for all policy areas, and additional burdens and transaction costs associated with the coordination and management of a single Programme. For example, in the Netherlands, the current different programmes are managed by different ministries. Could you provide further analysis on the (national) implications for execution and monitoring, and the incidental or structural cost that may come with this?

PUBLIC

PL Questions for WP COMPGRO IM - SMCP meeting on 3 October 2025

PUBLIC

- **Comitology and work programmes:**

How does the Commission intend to ensure that Member States have a genuine influence on the shape of the annual and multiannual work programmes, given that the draft regulation does not provide for a comitology procedure or formal implementing acts?
Is the Commission considering establishing a consultation mechanism or a decision-making forum (e.g. an expert committee) so that Member States can give their views on draft work programmes before their adoption?

- **Role of Member States in implementation:**

Does the Commission foresee specific mechanisms to ensure balanced access to funds for all Member States, in the absence of national envelopes?
What criteria will be applied when allocating funds to actions involving national authorities (e.g. purchases of control equipment, IT systems, statistics)?

- **Programme management and coordination:**

How does the Commission plan to organise the internal management of such a broad programme, covering different areas (customs, taxation, statistics, consumers, the internal market, financial fraud)?
Are dedicated coordination structures foreseen, such as a joint steering committee between the relevant Directorates-General, and what will be the formal role of the Member States in this process?

- **Flexibility and reallocation of funds:**

What procedures will apply when reallocating funds between the various components of the programme (e.g. customs, single market, statistics)?
Will Member States be informed or consulted on such reallocations, given that there are no fixed national or thematic envelopes?

- **CCEI (Customs Control Equipment Instrument)**

How does the Commission intend to guarantee sufficient and predictable funding for the CCEI component within the new SMCP programme, given that it will no longer have a separate budget line but will be included in the broader pool of customs funds?
What mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that Member States can plan with certainty for their long-term equipment needs (purchases, maintenance)?

- **(EU Customs Agency) EUCA**:

How would the relationship between the SMCP and EUCA be formally regulated?

- **Impact on national administrations:**

Has the Commission carried out a detailed assessment of the impact of the new integrated programme on the administrative burden of national authorities (customs, tax, statistical, market surveillance)?
Are technical support mechanisms foreseen for administrations that will need to adapt to the new systems and requirements arising from the SMCP?

PUBLIC

PT COMMENTS

We support the intention of this proposal to promote greater simplification, flexibility, and synergies: by bringing together Single Market, Customs, Taxation and Anti-Fraud interventions under one single programme is aligned with current challenges.

However, the initial presentation by the Commission and supporting documentation raise a significant set of uncertainties. The proposal, in its current form, lacks the necessary clarity that would allow an in-depth assessment, particularly in the following areas:

- Governance and the Role of Member States: The main concern lies in the absence of a comitology procedure for the approval of the work programmes, which is a departure from other programmes and raises questions about the strategic role of Member States in the management and priority-setting of the Programme.

- Budgetary Clarity and Continuity: The difficulty in comparing the new SMCP's budget proposal with the sum of the previous programmes does not allow to confirm thar the budget proposed indeed corresponds to an increase. The initial perception points to a possible net reduction in funding for crucial areas, and there is a lack of visibility on the continuity of essential actions.

- Flexibility vs. Predictability: While flexibility is an important goal, implementation without clear safeguards could compromise the predictability and stability of funding for areas with ongoing legal obligations.

- Effectiveness and Impact: The proposal and its respective impact assessment lack detail on how the new programme will, in practice, reduce market barriers, decrease disparities in access to funding among Member States and regions, and address the specific needs of the Outermost Regions (ORs) and SMEs.

In this context, and in order to prepare for the upcoming discussions, we request that the Commission provide clarification on the following questions:

1. Governance and Comitology: Can the Commission justify the decision not to include a comitology procedure for the approval of the SMCP's work programmes, contrary to what is foreseen in other programmes such as the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF)? How does the Commission intend to ensure the strategic involvement of Member States in defining funding priorities without this mechanism?

2. Comparative Table of Budgets and Actions: We request that the Commission provide a detailed comparative table that sets out the five programmes of the 2021-2027 MFF and the new SMCP side-by-side. This table should specify, for each area, (a) the budget in the previous period, (b) the proposed budget, and (c) a clear list of actions that are continued, discontinued, or transferred to other programmes.

3. Budgetary Flexibility: How will budgetary flexibility be operationalised between the different pillars of the programme? What safeguards are in place to ensure that areas with ongoing legal obligations do not lose predictable funding in favour of new emerging priorities?

4. Support for SMEs and the Digital Product Passport: In what concrete way will the SMCP finance support for SMEs, particularly in their adaptation to new digital

requirements such as the Digital Product Passport (DPP)? What kind of actions and what budget allocation can be expected for this purpose?

5. Outermost Regions (ORs): Can the Commission clarify how the specificities of the ORs, as provided for in Art. 349 of the TFEU, will be taken into account in the design and implementation of the actions financed by the SMCP, given that they are not mentioned in the impact assessment?

6. Reducing Disparities in Access: What specific mechanisms are planned in the SMCP to achieve the objective of reducing the "disparities in the capacity of different MS and regions to access the current programmes" and to ensure more equitable access to funding?

PUBLIC

PUBLIC

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Single Market and Customs Programme for the period 2028-2034 and repealing Regulations (EU) 2021/444, (EU) 2021/690, (EU) 2021/785, (EU) 2021/847 and (EU) 2021/1077 (doc. 12486/25)

SK comments

General comments

Slovakia supports in general the objectives of the Single Market and Custom Programme proposal to enhance and deepen the functioning of the Single Market and the Customs Union in order to protect financial and economic interests of the Union and its Member States.

On the one hand we understand the reasons for merging several programmes under one umbrella of the Single Market and Customs framework in order to achieve greater flexibility, synergy and reduction of administrative burden.

However, on the other hand we have some concerns in this regard as to whether merging previously separated programmes could not weaken funding for some of the areas covered by the SMCP in the future, especially with regard to financing customs union initiatives**. Therefore,** clear rules for transfers between individual areas/objectives of the SMCP is to be considered in line with better regulation principles.
In general, we also welcome the focus of the SMCP on **capacity building** of national authorities, cooperation between customs and market surveillance authorities which we consider as a prerequisite for addressing the challenges of e-commerce. Therefore, Slovakia considers as essential and inevitable to address the e-commerce issues among programme objectives within the article 3, especially the implications on customs supervision with particular emphasis on digitalization.

We appreciate that the SMCP includes the continuation of the Union's **anti-fraud** programme. In our view, this is one of the key components of the SMCP in order to ensure the effective protection of the EU financial interests having impact on EU budget. Therefore, it is necessary to continue to strengthen the capacities of Member States, to increase their ability to prevent and investigate fraud (as on the revenue as on the expenditure part of the EU budget), as well as to provide the necessary tools, including digital and analytical tools, to fight fraud**.**

We also welcome SMCP focus on **consumer protection** as one of the key areas that directly contributes to strengthening citizens' trust in the Single Market. SMCP initiatives proposed in this area are welcomed, in particular projects aimed at increasing consumer awareness, including digital and financial literacy; empowering consumers in the Single Market, including access to advice, information and consumer redress and compensation mechanisms; strengthening the human, professional and technical capacities of Member States to improve consumer law enforcement; making wider use of digital technologies and artificial intelligence. However, in implementation of the projects it is necessary to take into account the need to simplify applicants' access to funding, reduce the overall administrative burden, especially with regard to small Member States, availability of Member States resources for co-financing projects and aspect of interoperability in proposed digital solutions.

We appreciate the proposal to increase budget for **European statistics** to €833 million, which clearly confirms the importance of credible and high-quality European statistics. We do have a

comment on the draft annex, which reflects the thematic priorities discussed within the European Statistical System (ESS). However, we would like to point out that the priorities proposed in the annex are ambitious and thematically too broad. Therefore, the annex appears unbalanced and inconsistent and may make priorities implementation and their communication to national statistical institutes (NSIs) and users of statistics more difficult.
We welcome the efforts to strengthen cooperation within the European Statistical System (ESS) by building collective networks, sharing expertise and results, and promoting specialization in selected tasks. At the same time, we consider it necessary to underline that any specialisation of individual national statistical offices (NSIs) should be purely voluntary and based on mutual agreement between Member States. In the case of smaller Member States, mandatory or excessive specialization could weaken their overall capacities and increase dependence on other resources and jeopardise their ability to meet all statutory statistical tasks at national level. Flexibility and proportionality should be maintained in the implementation of such initiatives.
We also support the use of grants to strengthen national statistical offices, but we would like to point out that grants cannot ensure the long-term sustainability of the activities supported by the grant, as after the grants are exhausted there is a lack of financial resources and human capacity to continue these activities at national level.

SK comments on the Articles

Article 4 –Budget

a.) Article 4 just indicates a total budget of EUR 6.238 billion. However, we would also like to see a ***breakdown of the total budget by areas covered by the SMC programme as a legislative provisions laid down within respective article*** (as it is reflected in the legislative financial and digital statement of the proposal, p. 18).
Justification:
The introduction of such a breakdown will allow for a better overview of the allocation of financial resources for individual areas and objectives of the SMCP.
For example, under the UAFP 2021-2027, funding was broken down in detail by objective, which allowed for a clear tracking of the allocated resources. The current proposal lacks such a structure.

b) We would also like to propose to add the mechanism for budgetary commitments to individual areas/objectives of the SMCP and to set up clear rules for transfers between individual areas/objectives.
Justification:
Proposal does not set up any rules on stable and predictable financing of the individual parts/objectives of the programme. This raises questions in particular in relation to the financing of activities of customs union and the anti-fraud fight and alike financing of activities of the Single Market and the Customs Union.
How will the Commission ensure that each part of the programme will have sufficient and predictable financing throughout the whole programming period? The so called “priority swift” with no clear rules might threaten the programme´s objectives.

c) We propose to add wording that would impose an obligation on the Commission to ensure stable financing of the IMS a AFIS IT systems under the anti-fraud objective.

Justification:

AFIS and IMS are key IT systems for exchange of information and reporting irregularities. These platforms require long-term and predictable funding, otherwise there is a risk of their weakening.

How will the Commission ensure stable and predictable funding for AFIS and IMS? AFIS and IMS are the EU's core IT tools for fighting fraud and ensuring the obligations arising from Art. 325 TFEU and they are the main tools for exchanging data and reporting irregularities.

Article 11 work programme

We would prefer to keep the current practice (applied under the current SMP) and adopt the annual work programme by comitology with the involvement of MSs. We support to introduce a comitology procedure for the adoption the annual work program.

We would also welcome more clarification regarding the management of the entire programme. We would like to ask for clarification, whether annual programmes will be adopted separately for each area of the SMCP, or there will also be an annual work program for the SMPC as a whole, in order to get (each year) a better picture about the flow of financial resources between the different SMCP areas.
Does the EC plan to introduce multi-annual work programmes or will the system be set up for annual periods?

Article 3 – programme objectives, para 2 e) MSs cooperation

How does the Commission plan to strengthen the motivation of Member States to share sensitive information on fraud and irregularities under the programme? Effective fight against fraud requires intensive data exchange and trust between national and European authorities. However, in practice, there are barriers to sharing sensitive data.

Article 3, para 2 letter b), e), f) - IT tools and digitalization

Given the increasing volumes of data and new types of fraud, we would propose to add in the Article a commitment by the Commission to modernize and expand AFIS and IMS systems.

What are the Commission´s plans for the development of digital solutions in the area of protection of the Union's financial interests (AFIS, IMS)? Does the Commission plan to extend the functionality of IMS and AFIS and add new tools for more efficient data exchange? Does the Commission plan to adopt a roadmap for their modernization?

Article 3, para 2 letter d)

We propose to add some necessary clarification in respect of customs controls and availability of customs controls equipment. Hence, after words "market surveillance" we

propose to add the following text "and effective customs controls enabled by customs controls equipment available to all MSs".

For your convenience, please see the proposal added to the text:
(d) to support the Customs Union and customs authorities working together and acting as one in achieving their mission and contributing to Europe's economic security, to ensure an effective market surveillance and effective customs controls enabled by customs controls equipment available to all MSs and a high level of consumer protection, product conformity and safety

Article 9 - eligibility, Article 10 – eligible entities

We would like to ask to clarify the list of entities eligible for funding. It is not clear whether the customs, police and judicial authorities and non-profit organisations remain eligible beneficiaries for the area of combating fraud.

Article on monitoring and evaluation of the SMPC is missing in the proposal establishing SMCP for the period 2028-2034

We propose to add article on monitoring and evaluation of the SMCP, as well as an annex setting out minimum common indicators for monitoring outcome, benefits of the programmes.
Justification:
Transparency and measurable results are key to assessing the effectiveness of the programme. In the UAFP 2021-2027, indicators were clearly defined. The lack of indicators weakens control over implementation and does not allow Member States or the EC to assess the benefits.