

**“Consumers and the euro” conference  
Monday 14 March 2005  
Conference Centre Albert Borschette  
Room CCAB 0/A  
Rue Froissart/Froissartstraat 36, 1040 Brussels, Belgium**

**PROGRAMME**

08:30-09:30 Registration and coffee

09:30-10:00 **Opening speech** “The euro and consumers three years on” –  
**J. Almunia, European Commissioner for Economic and  
Financial Affairs**

**First session “Consumer perceptions of the euro”  
Chair: J. Maaten, European Parliament, Committee on  
Economic and Monetary Affairs**

10:00-10:20 “Do consumers benefit from the euro?” - J. Murray, Director,  
European Consumers’ Organisation

10:20-10:40 “The euro in opinion polls: consumers’ perception” – L. de  
Voogd, Managing Director, Gallup Europe

10:40-11:00 Panel discussion

**11:00-11:30 Coffee**

## **Second session “Price increases and inflation rates: why is the euro blamed?”**

**Chair: J. Maaten, European Parliament, Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs**

- 11:30-11:50 “Price perceptions and inflation rates: what is real?” – J.H. Schmidt, Director, Economic evaluation service, Economic and Financial Affairs DG, European Commission
- 11:50-12:10 “The euro as a means of guaranteeing price stability” – H-J. Klöckers, Director Economic Developments, European Central Bank
- 12:10-12:30 Panel discussion (incl. U. Burani, Vice-President ECO-section, European Economic and Social Committee)
- 12:30-14:00 Lunch**

## **Third session “The euro in everyday life”**

**Chair: V. Arnault, European Commission, Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection**

- 14:00-14:20 “Psychological aspects of the changeover to the euro” – D. Rapoport, psychologist, sociologist and Director of DRC
- 14:20-14:50 “Using euro banknotes and coins: the experience of the first three years” – A. Heinonen, Director Banknotes, European Central Bank  
“Euro coins: ongoing developments”- J. Verhaeven, Economic and Financial Affairs DG, European Commission
- 14:50-15:10 “Using the euro abroad: cross-border issues” – J. Allix, Internal Market and Services DG, European Commission
- 15:10-15:40 Panel discussion
- 15:40-16:00 Tea**

## Fourth session “Lessons learnt: implications for the introduction of the euro in the new Member States”

- 16:00-17:00 Panel discussion with short introductions by:
- D. Staudenmayer, Health and Consumer Protection DG, European Commission
  - A. Rant, Vice-Governor, Central Bank of Slovenia
  - E. Constans, Ombudsman, French Ministry for Economic Affairs, Finance and Industry
  - H. Thibaut, Adviser on European Affairs, *Test Achats*
  - B. Angel, member of Commissioner Almunia’s private office
  - R. Hoffmann, Deputy Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation
- 17:00-17:30 **Closing remarks:** “The euro and consumers: working together for a better future” – **D. Reynders, Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance**
- 18:00-19:30 **Cocktail**