

**SINGLE MARKET ACT :
PUBLIC CONSULTATION – FIRST OVERVIEW OF RESPONSES**

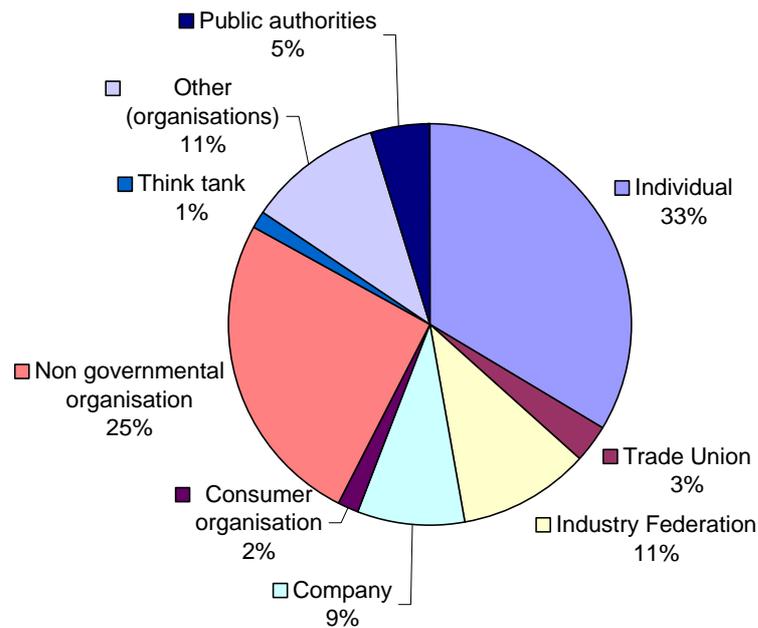
GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Commission services received a total of 740 responses to the questionnaire available online and more than 100 submissions sent separately. Online responses can be broken down as follows, according to the category respondents identified themselves with:

Respondents to the online public consultation on the SMA

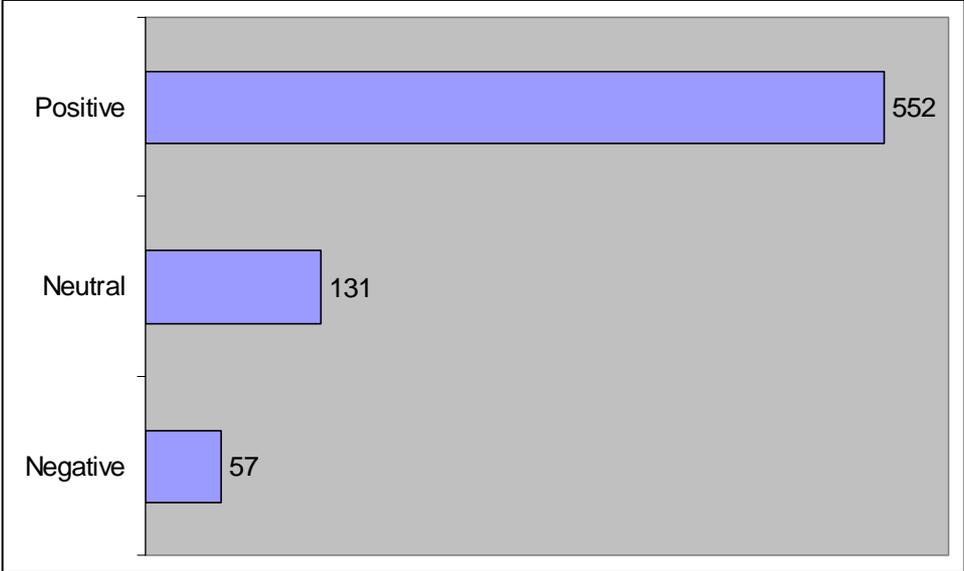
- Individual citizens – 248 responses (33.5%)
- Trade Union – 23 responses (3.1%)
- Industry Federation – 79 responses (10.7%)
- Company – 64 responses (8.6%)
- Consumer organisation – 12 responses (1.6%)
- Non governmental organisation – 189 responses (25.5%)
- Think tank – 9 responses (1.2%)
- Others– 81 responses (10.9%)
- Public authorities – 35 responses (4.7%)

Graph 1 – Categories of online responses



The Single Market Act was well received by the majority of those who participated in the consultation. Three quarters of online respondents declared their assessment of the Act is positive, 18% said it is neutral while 8% view it negatively. A break-down by category of respondents reveals however a certain degree of variation from the overall average.

Graph 2 – Overall assessment of the Single Market Act by online respondents (number of responses)



Respondents were also given the possibility to signal up to ten actions which they considered to be the most important of the 50 actions in the SMA. According to the overall online results, the actions on consultation with civil society in the preparation and implementation of EU texts (Action 48) and for the improvement of the legal status of entities operating in the field of social innovation (Action 37) received the largest number of preferences by far. It should however be pointed out that a very large number of respondents, in particular in the NGO category, but also in the individuals category, submitted identical responses to the consultation. This identical response involved exclusively indicating actions 48 and 37 as the most important actions in the SMA, and involved attaching an identical explanatory text supporting the choice of these two actions.

The full "top 10" list to the online public consultation of all 740 respondents (taken together) is as follows:

- 10 actions from the SMA considered the most important by 740 respondents to the online consultation (in descending order)**
1. Consultation and dialogue with civil society (action n. 48 in the SMA)
 2. Social Innovation (action n. 37)
 3. Internal market for services (action n. 4)
 4. Respect for fundamental social rights (action n. 29)
 5. EU patent (action n.1)
 6. SME access to finance (action n. 12)
 7. Electronic commerce (action n. 5)
 8. Recognition of professional qualifications (action n. 33)

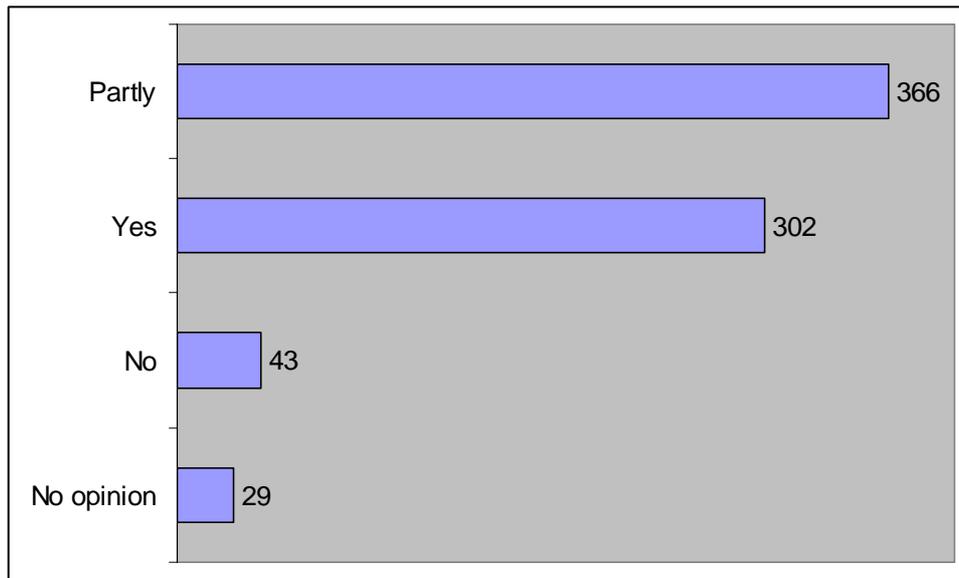
9. National transposition of EU rules (action n. 47)

10. Energy Efficiency (action n. 11)

Just outside this "top 10" list, the review of the VAT system (action n. 20) and the review of public procurement rules (action n. 17) followed close behind, in 11th and 12th place respectively.

A further question asked respondents whether the SMA proposed appropriate measures to address the issues/challenges identified in the document.

Graph 3 – Answer to the question "Does the Single Market Act propose appropriate measures to address the issues/challenges that are identified (number of responses)



OVERVIEW BY CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS

Individual citizens

Individuals' global view on the SMA is very positive, with almost 70% considering it a positive exercise, 18.5% having a neutral view and only 12.9% a negative opinion.

10 actions from the SMA considered most important by citizens

- Consultation and dialogue with civil society (action n. 48)
- Social innovation (action n.37)
- Transport infrastructures (action n. 26)
- Tax obstacles for citizens (action n. 42)
- Respect for fundamental social rights (action n. 29)
- EU Patent (action n. 1)
- Recognition of professional qualifications (action n. 33)
- National transposition of EU rules (action n. 47)
- Product safety (action n. 39)

- Internal market for services (action n. 4)
- Electronic commerce (action n. 5) (equal 10th position)

Trade Unions

Their global view of the SMA varies: 30.4% consider it positively, 43.5% neutrally and 26.1% negatively. The 10 measures most frequently cited by this stakeholder constituency as the most important actions were (in descending order):

10 actions from the SMA considered most important by trade unions

- Respect for fundamental social rights (action n. 29)
- Posting of workers to other Member States (action n. 30)
- Public procurement (action n. 17)
- Services of general economic interest (SGEI) (action n. 25)
- Pensions (action n. 31)
- Industrial restructuring (action n. 32)
- Corporate governance (action n. 38)
- Internal market for services (action n. 4)
- Consultation and dialogue with civil society (action n. 48)
- SME access to finance (action n. 12)
- Recognition of professional qualifications (action n. 33) (equal 10th position)

Most of them consider that the SMA only partially proposes appropriate measures to the existing challenges (60.9%). 21.7% believe it does not, 13% that it does, and 4.3% have no opinion.

Industry federations

79 industry federations responded to the online consultation, while many others submitted position papers outlining their views. 84% gave a positive overall assessment of the SMA, and none gave a negative assessment. The 10 measures most frequently cited by this stakeholder constituency as the most important actions were (in descending order):

10 actions from the SMA considered most important by industry federations

- EU Patent (action n. 1)
- Internal market for services (action n. 4)
- International trade (action n. 23)
- Electronic commerce (action n. 5)
- SME access to finance (action n. 12)

- VAT (action n. 20)
- National transposition of EU rules (action n. 47)
- Counterfeit and piracy (action n. 3)
- Small Business Act review (action n. 13)
- Standardisation (action n. 6)

Companies

64 individual companies participated in the online public consultation, from various industries, including from the social economy, while a number of others submitted position papers outlining their views.

Their outlook on the SMA is positive overall (73.4% of those who responded online). The 10 measures most frequently cited by this stakeholder constituency as the most important actions were (in descending order):

10 actions from the SMA considered most important by companies

- SME access to finance (action n. 12)
- Corporate governance (action n. 38)
- Internal market for services (action n. 4)
- Social business (action n. 36)
- EU patent (action n. 1)
- Private investment and venture capital (action n. 16)
- International trade (action n. 23)
- Energy Efficiency (action n. 11)
- Social Innovation (action n. 37)
- Electronic commerce (action n. 5)
- Pensions (action n. 31) (equal 10th position)

Consumer organisations

Twelve consumer organisations, operating at EU, national or regional level, and from different countries in the EU, also participated in the online consultation. The 10 measures most frequently cited by this stakeholder constituency as the most important actions were (in descending order):

10 actions from the SMA considered most important by consumer organisations

- Product safety (action n. 39)
- Passenger rights (action n. 43)
- Alternative dispute resolution and collective redress (action n. 46)

- Consultation and dialogue with civil society (action n. 48)
- Energy Efficiency (action n. 11)
- Internal market for services (action n. 4)
- Electronic commerce (action n. 5)
- Standardisation (action n. 6)
- Respect for fundamental social rights (action n. 29)
- Counterfeit and piracy (action n. 3)
- Ecological footprint of products (action n. 10) (equal 10th position)
- Accounting rules (action n. 14) (equal 10th position)
- Private investment and venture capital (action n. 16) (equal 10th position)
- Social business (action n. 36) (equal 10th position)
- Access to basic banking services (action n. 40) (equal 10th position)

Most of them (75%) have a positive view of the Single Market Act. Answers regarding the appropriateness of proposed measures are more nuanced, with 33.3% believing the SMA includes appropriate measures to address the challenges identified, 50 % believing it does so partly, one respondent saying it does not and one with no opinion.

Non Governmental Organisations

A very large number of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), 189 in total, responded to the consultation. NGO stakeholders encompass a wide constituency of organisations in the "third sector". 85% (161 respondents) gave a positive overall assessment of the SMA, and 4% gave a negative assessment. The 10 measures most frequently cited by this stakeholder constituency as the most important actions were:

10 actions from the SMA considered most important by NGOs

- Consultation and dialogue with civil society¹ (action n. 48)
- Social innovation² (action n. 37)
- Social business (action n. 36)
- Respect for fundamental social rights (action n. 29)
- Public procurement (action n. 17)
- Services of general economic interest (action n. 25)
- Internal market for services (action n. 4)
- Corporate governance (action n. 38)

¹ As mentioned in the General Overview section above, a very large number of respondents, in particular in the NGO and individuals categories, submitted an identical response to the consultation. This involved exclusively indicating action 48 (consultation and dialogue with civil society) and action 37 (social innovation) as priorities for the SMA, and attached the same explanatory text supporting the choice of these two actions.

² *Ibid.*

- SME access to finance (action n. 12)
- VAT (action n. 20)

Other organisations

81 organisations of a diverse nature responded to the online questionnaire. Organisations falling in this category represent a wide variety of interests and constituencies. Almost 80% of them have a positive view of the SMA, 15% have a neutral opinion and 6% see it negatively.

The 10 measures most frequently cited by this stakeholder constituency as the most important actions were:

10 actions from the SMA considered most important by other organisations

- Social innovation (action n. 37)
- Consultation and dialogue with civil society (action n. 48)
- Public procurement (action n. 17)
- Internal market for services (action n. 4)
- SME access to finance (action n. 12)
- EU Patent (action n. 1)
- Small Business Act review (action n. 13)
- Recognising skills and training (action n. 35)
- National transposition of EU rules (action n. 47)
- Respect for fundamental social rights (action n. 29)
- Recognition of professional qualifications (action n. 33) (equal 10th position)

Public authorities

35 bodies participated in the consultation online under the category "Public authorities". 60% of them have a positive overall view of the SMA, 37.1% a neutral one and 2.9% (one respondent) view it negatively.

The 10 measures most frequently cited by this stakeholder constituency as the most important actions were:

10 actions from the SMA considered most important by public authorities

- Public procurement (action n. 17)
- Energy Efficiency (action n. 11)
- Recognition of professional qualifications (action n. 33)
- Integrated transport system (action n. 7)
- Services concessions (action n. 18)
- Standardisation (action n. 6)

- Internal market for services (action n. 4)
- Ecological footprint of products (action n. 10)
- Services of general economic interest (SGEI) (action n. 25)
- Electronic commerce (action n. 5)
- SME access to finance (action n. 12) (equal 10th position)
- Transport infrastructures (action n. 26) (equal 10th position)