
Single Market Emergency Instrument (SMEI)

Consultation Response from the American Chamber of Commerce Ireland (AmCham) to the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment on the European Commission's proposed Regulation for Single Market Emergency Instrument (SMEI)

October 2022

The American Chamber of Commerce Ireland

The Voice of US-Ireland Business

The American Chamber of Commerce Ireland (AmCham) is the collective voice of US companies in Ireland and the leading international business organisation supporting the Transatlantic business relationship. Our members are the Irish operations of all the major US companies in every sector present here, Irish companies with operations in the United States and organisations with close linkages to US-Ireland trade and Investment.

AmCham welcomes the opportunity to submit to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment on the European Commission’s proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Single Market emergency instrument (SMEI).

The European economy and all its stakeholders rely on a well-functioning Single Market. Recent global events such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine have highlighted the need for a framework to ensure that the Single Market continues to function in times of emergency. A robust SMEI is in the interest of all member states, and AmCham broadly supports the suggestions put forward by the Commission.

Forward planning

AmCham welcomes the forward planning set out in the Commission’s proposal. The “toolbox of crisis response measures” and its three staged approach: “contingency planning”, “Single Market vigilance”, and “Single Market emergency” is cohesive and ensures that member states are as prepared as they can be if an emergency occurs. Forward planning is crucial in establishing clarity and in mitigating against disruption in times of crisis. Further, companies need foresight and clear roadmaps in order to prepare for emergencies. AmCham additionally notes the clear communication of this toolbox within the SMEI fact sheet.

Air connectivity

Much of the proposal stresses the need to maintain the travel of goods and people within the Single Market to the greatest extent possible, should a crisis occur. Of particular importance to Ireland, is the need to maintain air connectivity, and it would be beneficial if this was reflected in the SMEI.

As an island, Ireland depends on the maintenance of air connectivity for trade, business, and personal links to Ireland’s diaspora. Post-Brexit, this reliance has grown stronger due to the delays that are now associated with using the UK land bridge. AmCham’s members consistently raise the importance of connections between Ireland and European hubs in terms of business and in relation to connecting them with key markets.

During the Covid-19 pandemic the limitation on air connectivity had a major impact on supply chains to and from Ireland, and steps should be taken to ensure this is not the case in any future crisis. The need to protect the aviation sector and air connectivity is of the

utmost importance and should therefore be specifically addressed in the Commission’s proposal.

Cybersecurity

A second key omission to the Commission’s proposal is any reference to cyber-security. Cyberattacks on supply chains grew by 430% in 2021.¹ Whilst the proposal is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis or prediction of likely emergencies, it would benefit from an acknowledgement of the increasing importance of cybersecurity and its links to supply chains. In this regard it would be productive to include cybersecurity in the “contingency planning” section of the proposal, and further to include specific measures that need to be put in place under emergency circumstances pertaining to a cyberattack.

“Emergency mode”

AmCham notes that under “emergency mode” additional measures with a direct impact on business, such as priority rated orders, may need to be enacted, in accordance with “stringent procedural requirements.” AmCham acknowledges that, should such actions be necessary, a gradual, stepped approach to implementation will be taken, whereby the resort to more binding measures follows inaction of economic operators to tackle the crisis at stake.

Taking the Covid-19 pandemic into account, AmCham members took initiative in mitigating against the problem, and indeed were at the forefront of the response to the crisis. According to an OECD report, Ireland was fifth in the world for the export of COVID-19 related products and services.² Ireland proved to be a reliable partner for global businesses managing complex global supply chains throughout the pandemic.

¹ [SCOR, Cybersecurity of the supply chain](#)

² [Ireland's economic contribution to the US](#)