Television broadcasting activities. 'Television without frontiers'

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The co-rapporteur, Mr HOPPENSTEDT (EPP, D), approved the broad outline of the Commission's proposal, though he wanted to see a number of improvements made to it. There was a need to clarify the scope of the Directive, to strengthen the competitiveness of the European broadcasting industry and to provide protection for consumers. Believing that future developments in television should not be regulated in advance, the co-rapporteur was opposed to extending the Directive to cover new services, such as special interest channels, video on demand and teleshopping. In opposing the Committee on Culture's proposal that the quota system should be strengthened, Mr Hoppenstedt wanted to see a separate directive for cinema and for television, emphasising that it would be difficult to regulate the two sectors by means of a single text. The co-rapporteur also stressed the importance of protecting minors from scenes depicting pornography and violence. The chairman of the Committee on Culture, Mrs CASTELLINA, said that the purpose of the Directive was to introduce rules according to which the television stations were to plan their transmission quotas for 'European productions'. While she did not particularly like the word 'quota', she did maintain that the Directive would provide for a right of representation for each culture. The speaker also wanted the scope of the Directive to apply to the new services, so as avoid any imbalance in the regulations. Commissioner OREJA stated that the Commission would accept a large number of the amendments tabled by Parliament, namely seven in total and 26 in part. Amendments posing problems mainly comprised those that sought to include the new services, given that the latest novelties, such as 'pay per view' and 'new video on demand', were already covered by the Directive currently undergoing revision. As far as the applicable legislation was concerned, the Commissioner pointed out that the underlying principle was the mutual recognition of the monitoring system applied at the place of origin. The broadcasting body should come under the legal responsibility of one Member State alone. As regards the promotion of European works, the Commissioner thought that the amendments went further than necessary and he considered them unacceptable, since they were incompatible in the long term with the prime objective of freedom of movement. In respect of advertising and teleshopping, the Commission could not accept those amendments that were aimed at reducing the volume of advertising in relation to the reference year 1989. Finally, as regards the protection of minors, the Commission considered that studies were needed to look into problems such as the impact of advertising and the use of filtering devices for programmes with a potentially harmful content.