Impact of new technologies on the press in Europe

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In view of the crisis facing the written press, which has been aggravated by the advances made by electronic media, the Committee has proposed a series of initiatives, based on the report by Katerina DASKALAKI (UFE, Gr), to guarantee the specific role and permanence of the written word. There is a need for a suitable legal and institutional framework to protect journalists' social and labour rights, protection of intellectual property rights and harmonized rules for low or even zero-rated VAT for newspapers and periodicals. Consideration should also be given to common rules on reducing postal, telecommunications and freight charges for the press. The report also considers the need for reflection within the industry on self-regulation to prevent the sensationalism and invasions of privacy that are the hallmark of certain scandal sheets. Finally the Commission was asked to produce a communication analysing the various problems facing the written press with regard to competition and the preservation of pluralism.