The information and communication policy in the European Union

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Providing the public with better information on EU policies, helping it to understand the role of the institutions and the way they operate, as well as increased efficiency: these are some of the goals of the report by Peter PEX (EPP, NL) on information and communication policy in the European Union. This own-initiative report, which was adopted on March 18th by Parliament's Committee proposes that a European Information Board be set up to ensure better coordination between Parliament and the Commission. It also calls for greater decentralisation of EU information activities. The Board would be composed of the Commissioner responsible for information, the Director-General of the Commission's DG X (Information, Communication, Culture and Audiovisual Media), the Vice-President of Parliament responsible for information, the chairs of Parliament's Budget and Culture Committees and the Director-General of Parliament's DG III (Information and Public Relations). The Board would meet at least once every three months and would be responsible for coordinating the information and communication activities of the two institutions, assessing them and establishing guidelines for their development. It would report to Parliament. Although greater coordination is needed in the area of information, the Commission and Parliament have both common and separate objectives. Common or individual communication policies should therefore be devised according to requirements, says the report. This means that all communication activities geared to the needs of the general public, covering general information on the way the institutions operate and the content of policies, should be carried out jointly. Activities aimed at the press and those specific to each institution would be carried out by the respective information services of the two institutions. In addition, the infrastructure of the audiovisual services and press centres should be merged in order to achieve maximum effectiveness and efficiency. The committee also believes that information activities should be decentralised more. However, to enable the public to turn to a "one-stop shop", the national offices of the Commission and Parliament should be housed under one roof so as to create "European Union Houses" in all the Member States at national and eventually regional level.