The importance and dynamics of theatre and spectacle arts in the enlarged Europe

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Geneviève FRAISSE (EUL/NGL, F) on the importance and dynamics of the theatre and the performing arts in an enlarged Europe. The report called for support for the performing arts sector and wider cultural cooperation between the Member States and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The committee pointed out that the Member States were primarily responsible for the situation of culture in Europe and that their cultural policies favoured dissemination at national level rather than European exchanges. Productions should be disseminated more widely, through aid for translation and surtitles for dramatic works. National and regional theatres and festivals should give more space in their programmes to writers and productions from other European countries. The Commission was urged to support the creation of a database of contemporary plays, an incidental music and sound creation fund and a database of technical information on entertainment halls. The report also looked at the current constraints on the mobility of those working in the performing arts, and called for greater coordination between various social and tax laws. The Member States and the Commission were urged to abolish double taxation by the State of origin and the host State, to abolish all tax discrimination against non-nationals working in the performing arts and to establish tax measures to encourage mobility of performers and those working in the cultural field. MEPs also stressed the importance of basic and continuing training and called on the Council and Commission to include on the political agenda mutual recognition of performing arts qualifications between Member States. Member States were urged to give more weight to foreign language teaching in training courses for performers and to introduce performing arts education in schools from an early age. Amongst its other recommendations, the report called on the Commission to increase Eurostat·s productions of cultural statistics and urged Member States to apply the minimum VAT to cultural goods and grant tax relief to patrons of the arts. Lastly, Member States were reminded that public television had a cultural mission to promote broadcasts of the performing arts and provide cultural information, including during prime-time viewing hours.