Television without borders: implementation of Directive 89/552/EEC. 4th report

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Roy PERRY (EPP-ED, UK) on the Commission's 4th report on the application of Directive 89/552/EEC "Television without Frontiers". In the report, the committee restated its view that a complete overhaul of the directive was needed to take account of technological developments and changes in the structure of the audiovisual market. MEPs wanted the basic principles underlying the current directive (free movement of European television programmes, free access to events of major importance, the promotion of European and recently produced independent works, protection of minors and public order and protection of consumers) to be re-presented in the form of a framework package bringing together the "Television without Frontiers" directive, the e-commerce directive and the directive coordinating certain copyright rules applicable to broadcasting and retransmission. The committee also repeated its view that pluralism in broadcasting was an important safeguard for democracy, pluralism and cultural diversity. MEPs were concerned about the integrity of the media, which they felt was threatened by growing concentration in the media industry. Going against the views of the rapporteur, the committee went so far as to say that, in any new audiovisual package, rules should be laid down on ownership of television media to ensure pluralism in the field of information and culture. In addition, the Commission was urged to monitor levels of media concentration in Europe and to draft an updated Green Paper on this issue by the beginning of 2004. MEPs also called on the Commission, as part of a broad consultation process which had already been announced, to support the establishment of a working group of national regulators and representatives of public and private broadcasting systems in order to swap best practice on all forms of regulation, including co-regulation and self-regulation in the area of advertising and consumer protection.