Competition Policy. 24th report 1994

1995/2062(COS) - 18/12/1995

The committee adopted the report by Mrs Karin RIIS-JORGENSEN (ELDR, DK) on the 24th report of the Commission on competition policy. As regards competition authority, the motion for a resolution emphasised that all cases of state aid should be dealt with solely by the Commission's DG responsible for competition (DG IV) so that it could "truly become the European Union's competition authority". As regards transparency and subsidiarity, it highlighted that it was important to strengthen democratic control of competition policy. In this respect, a compromise was reached between the rapporteur and Commissioner Karel VAN MIERT. Greater cooperation was needed between the EP and the Commission and, in addition to the annual debate on competition policy, there should be regular meetings between the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Member of the Commission responsible for competition, the arrangements for these meetings being determined in common agreement. The Commissioner concerned would thus inform Members of the European Parliament of the latest developments in the sphere of competition policy. The motion for a resolution also called on the Commission to submit a report on industrial policy to be viewed in conjunction with the annual report on competition. Among the main challenges facing competition policy, the report stated that it was important to take a firm line with regard to state aid. However, a certain flexibility was required in relation to agreements between undertakings within markets which faced liberalisation or globalisation and vertical agreements within sectors. It was also important to make progress in reducing the turnover thresholds above which a concentration operation could be deemed to be of Community dimension. The proposal welcomed the fact that public undertakings would be subject to the same competition rules and hoped that the Commission would be vigilant in this respect. In addition, the motion for a resolution called on the Commission to draw up proposals concerning the definition and financing of public services and called for "the inclusion of a definition of public services in the Treaty" during the 1996 IGC. It was also important to establish a dynamic partnership between the public and private sectors. The motion advocated a firm policy on state aid and stressed the need for greater transparency, particularly by establishing a public register listing all the state aid granted by the authorities in each of the Member States, without, however, leading to any form of renationalisation of competition policy. The proposal underlined the need to coordinate competition rules with the CEECs and to establish a new set of competition rules at international level with a view to eliminating obstacles to trade in both the private and the public sectors.