Competition policy. 29th report 1999

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The committee adopted the report by Karin RIIS-JØRGENSEN (ELDR, DK) on the Commission·s 29th report on EU competition policy (1999). The report expressed support for a review of existing procedures and for an enhanced role for the European Parliament when Council adopted new legislation in the competition policy area by qualified majority, through the application of the codecision procedure. The rapporteur was anxious to ensure that the reforms to follow from the Commission·s White Paper, while removing unnecessary bureaucracy through the abolition of notification and authorisation procedures, would at the same time lead to legal certainty, especially as regards the clarification of the roles of national authorities and the Commission. The primacy of European law should not be undermined. As far as agreements were concerned, the report supported the notion of decisions being based on economic analysis with precedence given to promoting efficiency across the EU. The report raised the question of mergers by large companies in small Member States and emphasised the importance of completing the single market, so that the position of such companies could be considered in a wider European context. The rapporteur also wanted to see more consultation with interested parties, the minimum time period for assessing Commission communications increased from one to three months and consideration given to the adoption of a code of conduct for antitrust investigations so as to protect confidential information, in particular relating to computer searches. Other points taken up in the report included state aids (it called for league tables to be established), aid to South Korean shipbuilders and the application of EU competition policy rules to the applicant Member States.