Information society: copyright and related rights

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The Committee adopted by a large majority the report by Roberto BARZANTI (PES, I) on the proposal for a Parliament and Council directive to harmonise certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society. The committee has thus responded to the appeal to the President of the European Parliament, Mr José María GIL-ROBLES, and the Chair of the Legal Affairs Committee signed by 400 internationally renowned artists, who protested that they lose vast amounts of income every year as a result of the free use of musical and audiovisual works on the Internet. The Spice Girls, Eros Ramazotti, Jean-Michel Jarre and others called for clear, strict laws on the use of original works and copies on the Internet. In their appeal they say "Europe has always backed its artists to the hilt by providing proper protection for intellectual property. We need to safeguard these rights more than ever today. The directive seeks to adapt existing legislation on copyright and related rights to take account of the existence of the information society and provide legal protection in areas such as rights of reproduction, communication to the public, distribution and legal protection of anti-pirating systems. The proposal stresses that it seeks to cover not only creative and performing artists but also producers of CDs and CD-ROMs and radio stations. The amendments adopted by the Legal Affairs Committee seek to strengthen support for rightholders so that they can usually receive a fair remuneration when their works are reproduced or publicly communicated. This would apply, for example, to private copies of musical or audiovisual works in the form of cassettes or CDs, for which some degree of remuneration is required for rightholders. It would also apply to Internet operators, who would have to pay if they wished to use works on the Internet.