Free movement of workers and their families: abolition of restrictions on movement and residence

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The committee adopted the report by Mr Klaus-Heiner LEHNE (PPE, D) on the abolition of identity checks at borders (amendment of Directive 68/360/EEC on the movement and residence of employed persons from Member States and their families and Directive 73/148/EEC on the abolition of restrictions with regard to the establishment and provision of services). The previous directives left Member States with the power to demand an identity card or passport from persons entering their territory. This proposal aimed to abolish checks at internal borders not only for workers or self-employed persons and members of their families, but also for the other categories benefiting from free movement: pensioners, students, etcetera. In general, the committee supported the Commission's proposal, which removed restrictions to free movement, a fundamental right for citizens of the European Union (Article 8a of the EC Treaty), and did not adopt any amendments. The rapporteur, Mr LEHNE, hoped that the directive would soon be adopted by the Council so that border controls for European citizens would disappear as quickly as possible. During the debate, Mr Georgios ANASTASSOPOULOS (PPE, G) stressed that it was essential to bring together the various directives on the movement of persons in a single text (codification) as the EP had often requested.