Authors'rights, related rights: Community framework for collecting societies

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Raina Mercedes ECHERER (Greens/EFA, A) on a Community framework for collecting societies for authors' rights. MEPs said that, in view of the enlargement of the EU, "suitable action" may be needed in the area of collective exercise of rights. The report also pointed out that, in the new Member States, collective management societies were still lacking for some sectors, right-holders and repertoires, existing societies remained tentative and were encountering difficulties in collecting the remuneration due from their members, and the specific assistance support programmes for the collecting societies of these countries, as employed under PHARE and TACIS as part of the pre-accession strategy, should therefore be retained with a view to increasing the circulation of works, enhancing the European heritage and increasing legal certainty. It therefore called on the Commission to draw up a proposal accordingly. With regard to competition, MEPs called for a critical analysis by the Commission of the vertical concentration of the media and its effect on the exercise of rights. They also wanted to see comparable and compatible arbitration mechanisms throughout the EU, access to which would be affordable to users and authors, for disputes between right-holders and collective management societies, between one collecting society and another, and between collective management societies and users. Lastly, they called for efforts to seek an appropriate procedure for the cross-border settlement of conflicting decisions in the member countries.