Area of freedom, security and justice: compensation to crime victims

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The committee adopted the report by Roberta ANGELILLI (UEN, I) broadly approving the proposal under the consultation procedure, subject to a large number of technical and drafting amendments. It wanted all cases of injury leading to permanent incapacity and all cases of psychological damage to be taken into account when determining compensation, and said that compensation should also be payable for any damage to property sustained by the victim of an intentional crime of violence. Rather than the vague term "close relatives" which the proposal uses when stipulating who shall receive compensation in the event of a victim's death, MEPs preferred to refer specifically to "spouses and first-degree relatives" to avoid any confusion. They also defined "minor injuries" as "injuries that do not have a significant pecuniary or non-pecuniary, direct or indirect, impact on the victim's life and its quality." The committee increased the minimum amount to be set by Member States as compensation payable to crime victims from EUR 60 000, as proposed by the Commission, to EUR 100 000 and said that this amount should be updated annually upwards or downwards in line with the increase or decrease in the cost of living index. In addition, MEPs inserted a clause stipulating that, before applying for state-funded compensation, the victim should have exhausted the possibilities of compensation through state or private insurance schemes. Lastly, the committee recommended that any language problems experienced by the victim should be taken into account in crossborder cases and urged the Commission to draw up a harmonised compensation application form, in all Community languages, which could be used for communication between the various Member State authorities.