Competition Policy. 24th report 1994

1995/2062(COS) - 14/02/1996 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted the report by Mrs Karin RIIS-JORGENSEN (ELDR, DK) on the 24th report of the Commission on competition policy. The principal elements of the EP resolution were as follows: - The competition authority: the EP insisted that all cases of state aid be dealt with by the Commission's DG IV in order that it could truly become the EU's competition authority; - Transparency and subsidiarity: the EP stressed the need to strengthen the democratic control of competition policy. This meant greater cooperation between the EP and the Commission involving, in addition to the annual debate, regular meetings whose arrangements would be determined by common consent between the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and Industrial Policy and the Member of the European Commission responsible for competition. The latter would personally inform MEPs of the latest decisions and developments in the sphere of competition policy. The Commission was £also invited to present an annual report on industrial policy. Furthermore, the EP proposed the introduction of a hotline to inform SMUs of relevant decisions. - The challenges: the EP stressed that a firm line should be taken on state aids. On the other hand, the Commission needed to be more flexible about agreements between undertakings within markets, such as telecommunications and information technology, which faced liberalization and globalization, and about vertical agreements within sectors. The EP called for progress to be made on reducing the turnover thresholds above which a concentration operation could be deemed to be of Community dimension. It also called for the continuation of the process aimed at introducing competition to sectors hitherto protected by national governments. It called on the Commission to develop proposals on the definition and financing of public services and called for the inclusion of a definition of public services in the Treaty during the 1996 IGC. - State aid: the EP called upon the Commission to apply rigorously the rules concerning the granting of state aids, while reconciling their application with the principles of economic and social cohesion and with the protection of Community interests in its regional policy. Whilst regretting the level of aid granted to European airlines it nevertheless called for state aid to be granted for the conversion of industries hit by structural change, and for temporary aid for the affected workforce. - International aspects: the EP stressed the need to coordinate competition rules with the countries of central and eastern Europe and to introduce a new set of competition rules at international level aimed at removing obstacles to trade both in the private and in the public sector. It called for the prompt opening of negotiations under the aegis of the WTO with the aim of incorporating minimum standards on competition and on social and environmental protection in multilateral trade.