Television broadcasting activities. 'Television without frontiers'

1995/0074(COD) - 10/06/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, 3rd reading

By adopting the report by Mr GALEOTE QUECEDO (PPE, E) and Mr HOPPENSTEDT (PPE, D), the European Parliament approved the joint text adopted by the European Parliament/Council conciliation committee on the revision of the 1989 directive, known as 'television without frontiers'. Although the quota principle has not been changed, the new text aims to take account of market developments, including those due to technological advances. The directive's scope, however, remains the same (it applies to 'point to multipoint' broadcasting systems). The conciliation committee reached a compromise on three points considered to be matters of priority by the European Parliament at the second reading: unencoded access to events of major importance, the V-chip and the definition of independent producers. - on the question of broadcasting major events, the principle of mutual recognition was adopted. Each Member States will draw up in good time a list of national or other events. It will also establish whether these events should be broadcast live, wholly or in part, or whether, if necessary, for objectives reasons of general interest, they should be recorded, wholly or in part. The Member States must forward the list they have drawn up to the Commission, which will check that the measures are compatible with Community law and notify the other Member States of them. The measures will be published in the Official Journal. The directive also sets out certain criteria to be taken into account in judging whether an event is of major importance to society. - on the question of the V-chip, it is provided that the Commission will carry out within a year, in liaison with the relevant authorities in the Member States, an inquiry into the advantages and disadvantages of measures designed to facilitate parental control. This study will examine inter alia the installation of filtering systems, encouragement of family viewing policies and education and awareness-raising measures; - as regards the definition of independent producers, the directive provides that the Member States shall take account of criteria such as the ownership of the production company, the number of programmes supplied to the same broadcasting body, and the holding of secondary rights. The other aspects of the compromise relate to the following points: - broadcasting in languages other than those of the Member States: the provisions relating to quotas and to independent producers do not apply to channels which broadcast in such languages or to the parts of programmes which deal with them; - pluralism and competition in the audiovisual sector: the Member States must avoid establishing or reinforcing dominant positions by mergers, agreements or acquisitions; - support for European production: the directive recalls that the Commission proposed that the making of European productions should also be encouraged by means of a Community mechanism such as a guarantee fund. This objective can also be achieved in the Member States, which can, in organizing their broadcasting services, give some broadcasting bodies a general-interest remit, including a requirement that they invest extensively in European productions; - the tasks of the contact committee: the directive provides for a contact committee to be set up within the Commission for the purpose of facilitating the implementation of the directive. It will be able to give opinions, on its own initiative or at the request of the Commission, on the application of the directive by the Member States.