Competition policy. 26th report 1996

1997/2069(COS) - 06/11/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Adopting the report by Mr Javier AREITO TOLEDO (PPE, E), the European Parliament called for better coordination and integration of resources by the Commission and the Member States in order to establish an efficient EU system for safeguarding fair competition. It called for closer cooperation among the Commission departments concerned and suggested that a separate department be set up within the Commission to evaluate the costs and benefits of implementing a competition policy, especially in terms of employment. As regards restrictive practices, the European Parliament deplored the lack of a genuine internal market for the distribution and servicing of motor vehicles and called on the Commission to ensure once and for all that there was a free market where consumers could buy a car outside their own Member State without any problems. It urged the Commission to take the first steps to decentralize control of collusive practices and considered that national competition laws should gradually be approximated. As regards the abuse of a dominant position, the European Parliament suggested that an examination was needed, on the basis of the ownership criterion, of predatory pricing and other unfair practices and barriers in the fields of mobile and satellite telecommunications, on-line services, media, air transport and the banking and financial sectors. As regards State monopolies, the European Parliament called in particular for greater liberalization of the gas market and in the management of airport and port infrastructures. In view of the increase in concentrations arising through mergers or cross-border alliances, it called for a practical definition of the "relevant market" based on the concept of substitutability of goods and services. Given the extremely high level of State aid in certain Member States, the European Parliament proposed in particular that a code of conduct be drawn up for State aid and urged that existing regulations be implemented to protect SMEs in the event of abusive aid being given to competitors. Finally, in view of the globalization of the economy, it believed it essential to strengthen cooperation with applicant countries and considered that the European Union needed to pay a more active role within the WTO.