Resolution on market regulations and competition rules for the liberal professions

2003/2586(RSP) - 16/12/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on market liberalisation and competition rules for the liberal professions. Parliament stated that the liberal professions are the expression of a fundamental democratic order based on law and are an essential element of European societies. Diversities rooted in the culture, legal history, sociology and ethnology of the various professional groups in the Member States must be limited by the need to cater for the requirements of a common European society. Parliament pointed out that it is both necessary and beneficial to the liberal professions to promote competition and freedom of provision of services in their own Member States and throughout the EU. However, the goal of promoting competition in the professions must be reconciled with the objective of maintaining purely ethical rules specific to each profession. The pursuit of this goal must respect the public-interest tasks with which liberal professions are entrusted. Rules are necessary in the specific context of each profession, in particular those relating to the organisation, qualifications, professional ethics, supervision, liability, impartiality and competence of the members of the profession or designed to prevent conflicts of interest and misleading advertising, provided that they: - give end-users the assurance that they are provided with the necessary guarantees in relation to integrity and experience, and - do not constitute restrictions on competition. Special considerations should apply to liberal professions active in the healthcare sector to ensure that the principles expressed by Article 152 of the Treaty are respected. The Commission is asked to consider these principles and concerns when analysing the rules governing the exercise of the different liberal professions in the Member States.