European communication policy with citizens. White paper

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Luis HERRERO-TEJEDOR (EPP-ED, ES) in response to the Commission's White Paper on a European communication policy. Among its recommendations, the report said that the Commission should support the creation of a European public sphere for covering European affairs and also called on the Member States to encourage national public television channels to provide adequate information for citizens about the policies conducted at European level.

The committee supported the idea of setting up "a two-way communication between the EU and its citizens" but did not consider it appropriate to submit the European Parliament to a code of conduct regulating its communication with EU citizens. The Commission was asked to propose a draft interinstitutional agreement defining the common principles that could channel cooperation between the European institutions as regards communication. The committee stressed that the EU is often viewed "as a single whole" by citizens who do not always understand the finer distinctions between the institutions.

The report said that, in order to reach out to citizens, it was important to communicate better and to show the relevance and impact of EU decisions on their daily life. It suggested that emphasis be placed on communicating regularly with citizens about relevant regional and local projects in which the EU had participated. There was also a need to define the role that should be assigned to the media and find a formula that involves national, regional and local media more closely in communication policy. Lastly, the Commission was asked to use "clear and concise" language when communicating with the media and citizens and to avoid the use of EU jargon, which "increases rather than closes the gap between the EU institutions and citizens".