Follow-up to the report on competition in professional services

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Jan Christian EHLER (EPP-ED, DE) in response to the Commission communication on the follow-up to the report on competition in professional services. The committee welcomed the dialogue between the Commission, the Member States and professional bodies aimed at dismantling unjustified or harmful barriers to competition in professional services and rules which are against the interests of consumers and ultimately of the providers themselves.

The report said that effective and transparent self-regulation of services can be "an appropriate means of meeting the requirements of the Lisbon Strategy", but that Member States should ensure it does not damage consumer interests. The committee supported the adoption of codes of conduct by professional service providers.

MEPs wanted restrictions on advertising by professionals to be largely dispensed with, limited only to "duly justified exceptional cases".

The report urged the Commission to examine more carefully the expected impact of the full removal of unnecessary obstacles to competition, including on sectors that have limited resources or that are restricted to certain regions. Finally, it raised the issue of subdividing regulatory protection by category of consumer group, suggesting this may need further analysis.