Basic information

2007/2253(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Media concentration and pluralism in the EU **Subject** 3.30.02 Television, cable, digital, mobile 3.30.03 Telecommunications, data transmission, telephone 3.30.04 Radiocommunications, broadcasting 3.30.06 Information and communication technologies, digital technologies 3.30.08 Press, media freedom and pluralism	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
CULT Culture and Education	MIKKO Marianne (PSE)	11/09/2006

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs	CHATZIMARKAKIS Jorgo (ALDE)	19/06/2007
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	BELET Ivo (PPE-DE)	26/06/2007
IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	HERRERO-TEJEDOR Luis (PPE-DE)	31/01/2008
AFCO Constitutional Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Communications Networks, Content and Technology	REDING Viviane

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary

16/01/2007	Non-legislative basic document published	SEC(2007)0032	Summary
29/11/2007	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
03/06/2008	Vote in committee		Summary
10/07/2008	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0303/2008	
22/09/2008	Debate in Parliament		
25/09/2008	Decision by Parliament	T6-0459/2008	Summary
25/09/2008	Results of vote in Parliament		
25/09/2008	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2007/2253(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55-p4 Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CULT/6/41838

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE402.864	07/03/2008	
Committee opinion	ECON	PE400.630	09/04/2008	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE404.709	15/04/2008	
Committee opinion	ITRE	PE392.165	22/04/2008	
Committee opinion	LIBE	PE402.584	06/05/2008	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0303/2008	10/07/2008	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0459/2008	25/09/2008	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	SEC(2007)0032	16/01/2007	Summary

Media concentration and pluralism in the EU

2007/2253(INI) - 25/09/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 307 votes to 262, with 28 abstentions, an alternative joint resolution on concentration and pluralism in the media in the European Union, tabled by the PES, ALDE and Green/EFA groups.

The own-initiative report had been tabled for examination at plenary by Marianne **MIKKO** (PES, EE) on behalf of the Committee on Culture and Education. However, it was a revised version of the report that was finally adopted in plenary.

The new resolution urges the Commission and the Member States to safeguard media pluralism, to ensure that all EU citizens can access free and diversified media in all Member States and to recommend improvements when needed. Parliament firmly believes, in fact, that a pluralistic media system is an essential requirement for the continued existence of the democratic European social model.

Respect for competition and strengthening the legal framework: Parliament highlights the fact that the concentration of ownership of the media system creates an environment favouring the monopolisation of the advertising market, introduces barriers to the entry of new market players and also leads to uniformity of media content. It also points out that the development of the media system is increasingly driven by profit-making and that, therefore, societal, political or economic processes, or values expressed in journalists' codes of conduct, are not adequately safeguarded. It considers, therefore, that competition law must be interlinked with media law, in order to guarantee access, competition and quality and avoid conflicts of interests between media ownership concentration and political power.

Parliament demands the disclosure of ownership of all media outlets to help achieve greater transparency and that attention is paid to ensuring that national competition legislation on media, internet and communication technologies favours pluralism of the media. It considers that competition legislation must be applied in the media sector and that a maximum must be done to improve the competitiveness of European media groups. In parallel with respect for the principles of free competition, Parliament calls for the balance between public service broadcasting organisations and privately owned broadcasting organisations to be respected.

Parliament also invites the Commission to commit itself to promoting a stable legal framework with a guaranteed high standard of protection of pluralism in all the Member States.

Guaranteeing independence and quality: Members believe that the main objectives of public authorities should be to create conditions that ensure a high level of media quality (including in the public media), secure media diversity and guarantee the full independence of journalists. Moreover, Parliament considers the rules on media concentration should govern not only the ownership and production of media content, but also the (electronic) channels and mechanisms for access to and dissemination of content on the internet. In this regard, the alternative resolution calls for the creation of a charter for media freedom to guarantee freedom of expression and pluralism. It also stresses the need to institute monitoring and implementation systems for media pluralism based on reliable and impartial indicators. Members point to the importance of the creation and uniform application of editorial charters in Member States to prevent owners, shareholders, or outside bodies such as governments, from interfering with news content. A suitable balance among political and social sensibilities, in particular in the context of news and current affairs programmes should be ensured.

New media: while Parliament welcomes the dynamics and diversity brought into the media landscape by the new media and in particular weblogs (blogs) representing a new and important contribution to freedom of expression that is used more and more (both by professionals and individual citizens), their development still needs to be better monitored: Parliament encourages an open discussion on all issues relating to the status of blogs and the protection of copyrights at the level of online media, (with third parties having to mention the source when taking over declarations).

Media education: Members stress that media education should be enhanced to provide citizens with the means of bringing critical interpretation to bear on the ever-growing volume of information being imparted to them. This would also enable citizens to select the most appropriate media by allowing them to exercise their rights to the full where freedom of information and expression is concerned.

Broadcasting licensing and public channels: the alternative resolution calls on the Commission and the Member States to consolidate an objective framework for granting broadcasting licences in the areas of cable and satellite TV and analogue and digital broadcasting markets, on the basis of transparent and fair criteria, to prevent abuses by companies enjoying monopolies or dominant positions. Parliament reminds the Commission that on several occasions, it has been asked to draw up a directive that would aim to ensure pluralism, encourage and preserve cultural diversity, as well as to safeguard access for all media companies to the technical elements that can enable them to reach the public in its entirety. It invites the Member States to support high-quality public broadcasting services which can offer a real alternative to the programmes of commercial channels and can occupy a more high-profile place on the European scene as pillars of the preservation of media pluralism and democratic dialogue with citizens. Cooperation between European regulatory authorities also needs to be enhanced in the broadcasting sector.

Revision of the 2001 communication on state aids: Members call for the revision of the Commission's 2001 communication concerning the application to public broadcasting services of state aid rules to take due account of the Unesco Convention on cultural diversity and the Recommendation of 31 January 2007 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to Member States on the remit of public service media in the information society. The purpose is to ensure that any proposed measure or clarification is assessed as far as its impact on media pluralism is concerned and duly respects Member States' competences. There is a need to strengthen the role of the public service as an important guarantor of media pluralism in the Union and to enable it to participate freely in technological developments and deriving forms of content production and presentation (in the form of linear and non-linear services). The mandate of public service media should also include appropriate funding of new services.

The issue of the spectrum and frequency allocation in the digital context: the resolution considers for the public audiovisual media to fulfil their task in the era of digital technology, it is necessary for them to develop new information services and media over and above traditional programmes and to be able to interact with every digital network and platform. The European Parliament welcomes the implementation in certain Member States of provisions requiring cable television providers to include state-run channels and to allocate a section of the digital spectrum to public providers. It reiterates that

the regulation of spectrum use must take account of public interest objectives such as media pluralism and thus cannot be subjected to a purely market based regime. Member States should, therefore, remain responsible for deciding on frequency allocation to serve the specific needs of their societies in particular with respect to safeguarding and promoting media pluralism. Parliament also calls for a balanced approach to the allocation of the digital dividend to ensure equitable access for all players.

Data protection: MEPs express concern about the dominant position of a few large online players, which restricts new market entrants and thereby stifles creativity and entrepreneurship in this sector. They call for greater transparency with respect to personal data and information on users stored by internet search engines, email providers and social networking sites. They consider that regulation at EU level sufficiently safeguards the accessibility of electronic programme guides and similar overview and navigation facilities, but that further action could be considered to ensure that services of general interest are easily accessible. For this reason, Parliament calls on the Commission to ascertain whether minimal guidelines or sector-specific regulation are needed to safeguard media pluralism.

Media concentration and pluralism in the EU

2007/2253(INI) - 16/01/2007 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to provide an overview of the economic and legal reality of today's European media landscape with a view to protecting media pluralism.

BACKGROUND: the media face radical changes and restructuring due to new technology and global competition. Maintaining media pluralism is crucial for the democratic process in the Member States and in the European Union as a whole.

Responding to continuing concerns from the European Parliament and non-governmental organisations about media concentration, and its possible effects on pluralism and freedom of expression, the Commission presents a three-step approach on media pluralism in the European Union.

The three steps set out by Commissioner Reding and Vice-President Wallström, responsible for Institutional Relations and Communication Strategy, follows suggestions made at the Liverpool Audiovisual Conference in 2005, and indicates how this politically-sensitive issue should proceed.

Already the new Directive "Audiovisual Media Services Without Frontiers" (see COD/2005/0260) contributes to media pluralism in this respect. In particular, it would oblige Member States to guarantee that their national regulatory authorities are independent from their national governments and audiovisual media service providers.

CONTENT: In the 'Reding-Wallström' approach, the notion of media pluralism is much broader than media ownership. It covers access to varied information so citizens can form opinions without being influenced by one dominant source. Citizens also need transparent mechanisms that guarantee that the media are seen as genuinely independent.

The 'Reding-Wallström' approach has **three steps**:

1. **A Commission Staff Working Paper on Media Pluralism**: it outlines efforts to promote pluralism by third parties and organisations, notably the essential work undertaken by the Council of Europe, and has a concise first survey of Member States' audiovisual and print media markets. This baseline analysis also includes information on national media ownership regulations and the very diverse regulatory models of the 27 Member States;
2. **An independent study on media pluralism in EU Member States** to define and test concrete and objective indicators for assessing media pluralism in the EU Member States (in 2007);
3. **A Commission Communication on the indicators for media pluralism in the EU Member States (in 2008)**, on which a broad public consultation will take place. This could lead to an evaluation of the opportunity for applying the media pluralism indicators, for example through a further study.

Throughout the whole process, the Commissioners' Group on Fundamental Rights, as well as the European Parliament and Council will be kept informed about the progress made.