



Committee on Culture and Education

First discussion on the Directive on Audiovisual Media Services after Commissions' new proposal

Product placement and the principle of the country of origin seem to be the more difficult issues to be solved in the Directive on Audiovisual Media Services. The Committee on Culture and Education had their first exchange of views on the directive Wednesday on 21 March after a new proposal was presented by the Commission on 9 March 2007

The rapporteur Ruth Hieronymi (EPP-ED, DE) was from an overall point of view happy with the Commissions revised proposal. She announced that two thirds of Parliaments amendments from the first reading had been taken into consideration in the revised proposal from the Commission. 45 amendments had been integrated directly in the Commission text, 58 amendments had been taken in the principles, and 49 amendments had not been taken into consideration.

The question about product placement and the question of country of origin is still a subject of debate between Council and Parliament and was also the most debated in the committee.

The Parliament decided during the first reading in December 2006 that product placement should be banned in "news and current affairs programs, children's programs, documentaries and programs of advice". Member States could still permit it "in cinematographic works, films and series made for television and sports broadcasts", as well as in cases of "production props where no payment is made but certain goods or services are merely provided for free of charge with a view to their inclusion in a program."

Parliament then suggested that viewers should be appropriately notified of the existence of product placement in such programs, "at the start and the end of the program and by a signal at least every 20 minutes during the program". This last paragraph was not taken into account by the new Commission proposal. The Commission suggests instead that the viewers are informed after each commercial break.

As for the principle of the country of origin and the protection of minors, Mrs. Hieronymi was happy that the Commission had taken the same point of view as the Parliament. However, especially in connection with the principle of country of origin, Parliament and Council still seem to have very different views.

There was a lively discussion in the Committee on the issue on product placement well as on the principle of the country of origin. Other topics being discussed were the advertising for children, commercial breaks, the code of conduct.

The German Presidency expressed optimism about getting the Council to adopt a common position the 24 May. After that the second reading in the European Parliament will take place.

[Link to the procedure file](#)

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/FindByProcnum.do?lang=2&procnum=COD/2005/0260>

Link to the new working document from the Commission

<http://www.europa-kommissionen.dk/upload/application/d50fde3c/uuu.pdf>

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