

Doc. 11071
9 October 2006

Safeguarding freedom of expression and information in the digital media landscape

Motion for a resolution
presented by Mr Walter and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe recalls the importance of the right to freedom of expression and information for any democratic society, which is one of the fundamental values shared by all member states of the Council of Europe.
2. Freedom of expression and information is mainly realised through mass media including print media but in particular electronic media. The Assembly is aware that the technological development of the electronic media has changed the media landscape considerably today and that this development will continue further thus posing new challenges for realising this freedom.
3. Print media and broadcasters provide increasingly content on the Internet. Radio functions already well on the Internet for some time. With an increasing availability of wider bandwidth and higher performance of computers, audiovisual content will also grow on the Internet.
4. With this development, tools for searching and accessing Internet content will play a key role. It is therefore essential to analyse the potential dominant position of such Internet tools and ensure that freedom of expression and information is not compromised.
5. The digital evolution of traditional broadcasting has brought a similar challenge: digital satellite broadcasting and digital cable broadcasting are provided through platforms which offer a choice of channels. The enormous amount of channels offered requires a tool for selecting a few primarily viewed channels. Pre-selected channels will have a dominant position.
6. The provision of audiovisual content through mobile telephones or other receivers is still at an early stage. The fact that one telecommunications provider has to be selected by each user will put this provider into a dominant position vis-à-vis the individual user with regard to information services and ultimately audiovisual services.
7. Therefore, the Assembly resolves to analyse common approaches for member states with regard to safeguarding freedom of expression and information in this new digital media landscape.

Signed (see overleaf)

*Signed*¹:

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Baroness, HOOPER, Gloria, United Kingdom, EDG
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GROSS, Andreas, Switzerland, SOC
HURSKAINEN, Sinikka, Finland, SOC
LLOYD, Tony, United Kingdom, SOC
MARTY, Dick, Switzerland, ALDE
MOONEY, Paschal, Ireland, ALDE
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¹ SOC: Socialist Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democratic Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group