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31st Annual Report on Competition Policy

- Député européen (Verts, France) - Économie - Marchés financiers et harmonisation fiscale -



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Report on: 31st Annual Report on Competition Policy (2001)

by : Mr. Alain Lipietz (Number : A5 - 0352/2001)

As every year, the **European Commission's** Competition Report (2001) covers **antitrust rules** (art. 81, 82), state monopolies and monopoly rights (art. 31, 86), **merger control, state aid** (art. 87, 88), and **international activities**. For the EP, the presentation of this report is a good occasion to hold the Commission accountable in a field, in which Mr. Monti has strong deferred competencies and huge discretionary powers.

The Report on Competition Policy bears the stamp of the economic theory behind that policy. While agreeing with the basic lines, our **rapporteur, Alain Lipietz (Green/EFA)**, considers that the time has come for both theory and practice to be fine-tuned. This affects, e.g., provisions for **Services of General Interest**, where the State might be obliged to organise a monopoly in order to provide citizens with such services.

More generally, these services often requiring complex arrangements, which **transcend abstract competition rules** - must be governed by locally and democratically imposed rules.

The report received about **70 amendments** and was totally altered by PPE/Liberal majority during its vote in EMAC. In the final vote, Alain voted against his own report (7 votes from Green/EFA, GUE and dissident PSE against in total). The main points of **disagreement by PPE** were:

- ▶ The call for more **flexibility** in the application of competition rules to the **enlargement** countries as countries being in transition; equivalent treatment to that received by the southern European countries and the former East German Länder could be demanded;
- ▶ The statement that in revealing and fighting price cartels the Commission gives evidence to the fact that wage trends are not the only possible cause of inflation;
- ▶ The statement **that certain services might not be suitable for being opened up to competition** because that would compromise the very existence of this service;
- ▶ The call for state aid related to compliance with **international commitments to protect climate/ environment** should be treated differently from "normal" state aid;
- ▶ The request to the Commission to establish a definition and a list on **minimum services of general interest at European level**;
- ▶ The call upon the Commission to pursue efforts in the **WTO** to achieve recognition for services of general interest where they constitute the implementation of rights set out in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

All these points have been deleted. Instead, paragraphs were adopted, which are **unacceptable** to us, at least in the general/absolute way they are formulated like: "support for rapid and uniform progress towards liberalisation of the

European markets in energy, transport and postal services" (§ 24 and 25).

I suggest to **table several amendments** on the report (along the lost points of the draft and in co-operation with the PSE, which will also table some amendments in the same direction). I would recommend only voting in favour if these amendments are adopted. In case all amendments will be lost, Alain might consider withdrawing his name from the report.

PS:

Voir la [présentation de la situation](#).