

Contact: Laurens Rutten: +32 (0)2 743 15 97
Date: 11/12/2017

European Parliament must grasp opportunity to open-up Europe's audio-visual diversity to consumers

Tomorrow, the European Parliament will have the opportunity to let European consumers benefit more from the continent's cultural diversity. This could happen if they make films, TV series and documentaries accessible to all European consumers online.

In a vote last month, the Parliament's legal affairs (JURI) committee regrettably decided to only free up a foreign broadcaster's news and current affairs programme to consumers living in another EU country. This means everything else remains under national lock and key. The EP's plenary can overturn this decision and clear the path for a more ambitious proposal to cover more types of programmes.

Up to 80% of public broadcasters block consumers living in another country from watching their content online because of unfavourable copyright rules.¹ Because of this practice, millions of Europeans, including those permanently living in another Member States or belonging to a linguistic minority, are missing out on offers from different cultures.

Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), said:

"For consumers, especially the young ones, it is a mystery as to why audio-visual content from foreign broadcasters within the EU is out of reach just because they live in another country.

"Broadcasters are sitting on a mountain of interesting TV programmes but keep the door closed to anyone living outside their country. This does not make sense in what should be a digital single market.

"This regulation is about making it easier for broadcasters to make Europe's rich offer of films, series or documentaries available to everybody in the EU. It does not undermine the right of content producers to appropriate remuneration for their works."

END

¹ Final European Commission report on the E-commerce Sector Inquiry http://ec.europa.eu/competition/antitrust/sector_inquiry_final_report_en.pdf