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MEPs miss opportunity to end geo-blocking for audiovisual content

MEPs of the leading legal affairs committee today trimmed a proposal to make series, films or sport events available online if they are broadcast from another country. Now, the rules supported by the European Parliament would only make it possible for consumers to access news and current affairs programmes (for example a morning show) from a foreign broadcaster. The original European Commission proposal included all types of audiovisual content.

With this vote, MEPs support outdated geo-blocking practices which limit choice. This is particularly regrettable as consumers are clearly interested to legally access television programmes from another country.¹

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

“Because of this backward move, the situation for consumers living or studying abroad or travelling who are currently not able to watch the content of their choice will not improve. It is especially frustrating for consumers who belong to a linguistic minority and would like to watch series or films in their own language.

“MEPs missed an opportunity to put an end to geo-blocking and allow consumers to discover what makes Europe unique: its cultural diversity.”

END

¹ A recent survey from the German consumer organisation vzbv for instance showed that 73% of German consumers want to access sport events, films or series from a foreign broadcaster: <https://www.vzbv.de/infografik/infografik-stop-geoblocking>