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Committee on Culture and Education

.....(INI)

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DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Culture and Education

for the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

on reaping the full benefits of the digital dividend in Europe: A common approach to the use of the spectrum released by the digital switchover
(.....(INI))

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Supports the Commission's position that the digital dividend is of fundamental importance for the EU's economy, the achievement of the Lisbon process objectives and the i2010 strategy;
2. Stresses however that the digital dividend is also an important instrument in audiovisual and media policies, which could effectively promote and protect freedom of expression and media pluralism;
3. Is therefore convinced that decisions on organising, allocating and assigning the digital dividend should not be driven solely by concerns about maximising profit but should also protect current users of audiovisual media services and reflect cultural and linguistic diversity;
4. Emphasises that frequencies should be assigned in a transparent manner, taking into account all the potential uses for the new spectrum and their benefits to society;
5. Stresses that broadcasters are essential actors in the defence of pluralistic and democratic principles and that the opportunities relating to the digital dividend should enable public and private broadcasters, which could benefit in principle from lower spectrum fees, to provide programmes serving public service objectives;
6. Reiterates that in the interest of European citizens the digital dividend should be managed as efficiently and effectively as possible in order to avoid interference with the delivery of high quality digital TV programmes to an increasing number of citizens and to protect those citizens from sudden changeovers to new technologies.