[GB] Bill to Facilitate Electronic Commerce

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A new plan aimed to facilitate economic commerce was launched on 27 April 1998. The long-awaited is meant to deal with issues related to encrypted information on the Internet and has been introduced after extensive industry consultation.

According to the Minister for Small Firms, Trade and Industry, Barbara Roche, the Bill's intention is to launch a voluntary scheme which would envisage a group of licensing bodies providing encryption services and ensuring that minimum standards of service and quality are met.

In order to tackle the issue of electronic commerce security the UK government intends to introduce appropriate legislation favouring the growth and development of Internet transactions. The measures envisaged by the Government foresee not only in the already mentioned introduction of a voluntary licensing scheme but also in a set of measures to promote the legal recognition of the validity of electronic signatures. By the establishment of this action plan the Government acknowledges the fundamental importance of gaining the confidence of Internet users through guaranteeing the protection of both the integrity and the confidentiality of the information they trust onto the Internet.

In the second half of 1998 the Government plans to launch a consultation in order to access the impact of digital convergence on the legal regulatory framework. The consultation will aim at analysing the effect of the convergence in broadcasting and telecommunications as well as to determine other possible aspects that could be targeted in order to render them suitable to keep up with development of electronic commerce.

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