Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities : Europe's Way to the Information Society - An Action Plan.

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In its announcement of 23 February 1995, the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities noted the Community's invitation to the private sector to play a leading role in the setting up of the information society by launching a series of concrete initiatives. The Community undertook to set up the necessary regulatory framework. Various social, cultural, technical and industrial points need to be taken into consideration when promoting the information society, not forgetting the regulatory and legal framework and the basic services and networks.

The Bangemann report suggested doing away with the monopolies, liberalising the infrastructures and sharing out the public service obligations over all the operators offering their services to the public. The convergence of the computer audiovisual, telecommunications and publishing sectors means that regulations concerning the concentration of media ownership should be set out before any liberalisation measures are put through. This would need a stable regulatory framework, especially with regard to the concentration of media ownership, the definition and protection of universal service, the respect for privacy, intellectual property rights and the question of prices.

The Committee considers that the Commission should state as soon as possible what analyses it thinks ought to be carried out as to the potential social and economic challenges and risks that would lie on the road to an information society. The Committee therefore asked for a group of experts to be appointed immediately.

Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities on the Communication from the Commission "Europe's Way to the Information Society. An Action Plan".

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