European Parliament : Green Paper on Telecommunications

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The European Parliament reminds the Commission and the Council of the necessity of making sure that all citizens of the Union can benefit from an affordable, high-quality universal service with reasonable installation times. The Parliament also requested that the provisions governing the universal service should be set out and that these provisions be presented by the Commission as a question of urgency. Basic services and infrastructures should be set up at Union level, according to the different types of end-user concerned. These would be mainly low-income users with limited needs, the average end-user, small companies and community organisations such as schools, hospitals, etc.

Parliament considers that competition and the maintenance of shared interconnection and interoperability norms are two of the basic tenets of the system ; it also considers that particular care should be taken to allow competing companies to gain free access to all relevant networks and that the operators of the networks should keep a transparent accounting system that would show that they were not granting special access or conditions either to themselves or to favoured partners. The Parliament deplored the fact that hardly any attention was being paid to the social aspects of liberalisation and requested a detailed analysis of the costs and profits that would come about in terms of jobs.

Data protection should be determined in such a way as to ensure that sensitive individual data remain within the legal scope of the individual and that the individual retains free access to his personal data. When new telecommunications infrastructure networks are set up, they should come under the same environmental rules as for any similar construction.

With regard to media and culture, the Parliament asks the Commission to take cultural aspects fully into consideration, as well as the economic and social aspects. It urges the Commission to set up a regulatory framework designed to preserve European cultural diversity, plurality and identity, while also carrying out studies to examine the cultural and linguistic effects of the liberalisation of telecommunications and cable television networks and any possible knock-on effects on employment. The Parliament stressed that a separate legal framework, with a proper regulatory basis and specific licensing procedures should be set out for radio and television broadcasting, due to the special nature of the latter and

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its effect on the information society and on culture.

It rejects the argument that network operators should be able to decide what they should carry on cable networks independently of radio and TV broadcasters, and asks that "must carry" rules be applied to radio and TV broadcasting schedules. The Parliament also said that where there was a reduced capacity or an insufficient number of frequencies, then radio and television broadcasting schedules (radio and TV) should be given priority over telecommunications and other polyvalent services within the scope of decisions relating to access and that networks and frequencies that used to be used for radio and television should also be used in priority in the future for radio and television broadcasting. For international questions, Parliament asked that eastern European countries should be given special consideration and that funds should be granted to help them develop their telecommunications according to the model adopted by the rest of the European Union.

European Parliament, Resolution on the Green Paper on the liberalization of telecommunications infrastructure and cable television networks (Part II) (COM(94)0682 - C4-0030/95), 19 May 1995.

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