Conference of G7 Ministers on the Information Society

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At the Conference of Ministers held in Brussels on February 25th and 26th, the G7 countries jointly decided to take a leading role in the setting up of a global information network. The participants agreed that their future collaboration would be based on eigth basic principles of which two aim especially at encouraging competition and private investment. It is expected that an official structure will be set up which, in the opinion of the participating countries, must take users' needs into account and allow the association to supply services at reasonable prices.

Furthermore, this structure should ensure the protection of personal and private information. Competition rules should be laid down and implemented so as to allow global collaboration but still prevent the danger of abuse of market leader positions.

Other basic principles include encouraging variety in programs and equal opportunities for everyone. The participating countries are seeking to ensure a very wide range of services and free access to the network. Newly reformed States and developing countries will be especially involved in the setting up of this network since it is in these countries that new development is the most expected. Pilot projects are planned soon by the partners involved to demonstrate the opportunities offered by the new information network.

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