

Internet: multiannual action plan on promoting safer use

1997/0337(COD) - 24/09/1998 - Council position

The Council common position incorporates in full or in part 10 of the 25 amendments adopted by Parliament and broadly endorses the Commission proposal. The Council considers however that the content of the proposal was intended largely to provide adequate information for consumers regarding the Internet rather than to promote the development of the Internet industry, the latter objective being in its view of secondary importance. The Council therefore considered that Article 129a(1)(b) of the EC Treaty was the appropriate legal basis for the proposal and not Article 130(3) of the EC Treaty proposed by the Commission, which would mean recourse to the codecision procedure. Therefore the title of the decision was made more specific, stating that the action plan aimed to promote a safer use of the Internet by combating illegal and harmful content on global networks. In line with the new legal basis, the Council has included a financial provision stating that the financial framework for implementation of the action plan is ECU 25 million for the period from 1 January 1998 to 31 December 2001. An explicit reference to the indicative breakdown of expenditure at Annex II has been added. The common position also states that Community plan actions are designed to support and promote the measures to be taken by the Member States. Cases in which the committee responsible for assisting the Commission should intervene have been specified and new tasks planned: the committee will also intervene to assess projects and the estimated amount of the Community contribution when that is equal to or exceeds ECU 300 000. The Council has opted for a committee operating according to a type III A procedure. Regarding participation by third countries, the common position distinguishes clearly between the various categories of country concerned, i.e. the EFTA countries which are members of the EEA, the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Cyprus and third countries. The Council has strengthened the line of action on 'creating a safe environment' by increasing to 26-30% (instead of 14-18%) the indicative share of expenditure to be allocated to this line, cutting the other three lines accordingly. The indicative breakdown of expenditure is therefore as follows: - creating a safer environment: 26-30% - developing filtering and rating systems: 32-38% - encouraging awareness actions: 30-36% - support actions: 3-5%.