Telecommunications : competitive environment (amend. Directives 90/387/EEC, 92/44/EEC)

1995/0280(COD) - 10/12/1996

The rapporteur, Mr Herman (EPP, B), explained why the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs had again presented a series of amendments from the first reading, some of which had been rejected by the Commission. He thought in particular that it was vital to tighten up the definition of leased lines and to ensure number portability; this would allow users to retain their telephone number when changing networks, which would in turn rule out the imposition of additional charges, something that would impede genuine competition. Mr Herman also stressed that it was important to have a fully independent national regulatory authority as well as clear rules for the financing of the universal service, adding that he wanted to see a specific directive in this area, or even a Commission regulation. Finally, he advocated the establishment of a European supranational authority that would be responsible for monitoring the judicial consistency of the national regulatory authorities. Commissioner Bangemann agreed with Parliament that the deregulation of this sector could not take place without a European regulatory framework. He therefore supported the introduction of common arrangements for the universal service and pointed out that codification at European level would be very appropriate, given the rapid development of the telecommunications service. He said that he could accept those amendments that related to the regulatory bodies and to the role that they would play. The Commissioner wanted to see the Netherlands Presidency make some real progress on this issue during the first half of 1997.