

Telecommunications: open network provision (ONP) to voice telephony, and universal service

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The rapporteur, Mrs READ (PSE, UK), confirmed that she was aware of the need to adopt in due course the texts forming part of the '1998 liberalisation package' in the telecommunications sector. She also stressed the immensely lucrative nature of this market. As regards mobile telephony, Mrs Read admitted that this market was developing at different rates in the various Member States, but she also felt that there was a basic trend towards one market. Commissioner Bangemann considered that the problem of universal service would not be solved through social measures but would benefit more from the regulatory influence of the market and fairly rapid technological progress in this sector. While stressing the benefits of liberalisation for consumers, the Commissioner said that certain specific problems, such as those linked to disabled persons or low-income social categories, should be resolved at regional or national level rather than by the EU.