Telecommunications: Implementation of full competition in markets (amend. Direct. 90/388 /EEC)

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OBJECTIVE: to amend Commission directive 90/388/EEC in order to guarantee full competition in telecommunications markets. CONTENT: the draft directive, which will be adopted by the Commission itself, is based on Article 90 (3) of the EC Treaty. Its main provisions aim to ensure that: - Member States abolish special and exclusive rights to provide voice telephony infrastructures and services by 1 January 1998; - Member States introduce a regulatory system which guarantees that markets are properly liberalized, mainly by ensuring that existing telecommunications bodies provide connections to their voice telephony service and their switched telecommunications network on a non-discriminatory, proportionate and transparent basis; - Member States abolish special and exclusive infrastructure rights to provide the services already deregulated on 1 January 1996 (excluding vocal telephony before 1 January 1998), thereby allowing other infrastructures (e.g. railways, electricity networks) access to the market; - adequate digitalization is available for all telecommunication services by 1 January 1997. Numbers must be allocated on an objective, non-discriminatory, proportionate and transparent basis; - as far as funding the universal service obligation is concerned, only voice telephony service providers and public telecommunication systems contribute to the costs of the universal service, the method of dividing the costs between them is based on objective and non-discriminatory criteria and efficient recourse procedures are introduced in order to resolve differences relating to the amount to be paid by operators; - Member States with less developed networks are given a transitional period of 5 years and Member States with very small networks are given an additional period of two years.