Series of guidelines for trans-European telecommunications networks

1995/0124(COD) - 17/01/1996 - Committee of the Regions: opinion

The Committee of the Regions: - in referring to the opinions already expressed, underlined the crucial significance of local actions associated with the information society, especially as regards the creation of new job and those efforts directed at reducing the disparities that tended to affect citizens following the introduction of new instruments. In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity the Community should therefore support local innovation and refrain from making generalised definitions as to the content of the applications, especially when it came to the planning and implementation of applications relating to the information society. - expressed its concerns about the fact that the partitioning effect of the financial instruments could in certain cases disunite the regions instead of promoting their mutual cohesion, which was the ultimate objective of the exercise. - took the view, in response to opinions expressed in the report on the role of the Community, that as far as cohesion at regional level was concerned there was a need for greater use to be made of EU expertise in the field of projects relating to the information society, especially if their theme or content had a trans-European character. - supported the objective of extending the activities of the ISPO (Information Society Project Office) to the Member States and to the regions. Indeed, their effectiveness as sources of information and as coordinators for the different parties made them particularly well suited to the role envisaged by the Commission within the Community. - believed that it was extremely important to have a presentation of the position of the applications within the trans-European telecommunications networks, given that the impact of their subject matter continued to increase. - The Committee was keen to learn from the important lessons drawn from local and regional networks, which combined citizens, SMEs and the public offices. As the links forged with the network, and especially with the bordering networks and local services, were often essential in the eyes of the consumer, the Committee hoped that quickening the pace at which solutions were developed – and the Interregional Information Society Initiative (IRISI) was a good example of this – would take precedence over the development of other types of application. The importance of having centres for developing and providing multimedia services on a regional scale needed to be taken into consideration. The success of regional projects would stimulate demand for increasing the development of other applications and of an infrastructure of the type described by the Commission. - From among the main fields of application the existence of the internet had to be taken into consideration for the development of a trans-European network serving the universities and research institutes, for as far as these establishments were concerned the objectives were practically achieved. - hoped that the call for proposals for applications of collective interest would define the services envisaged in such a way that prospective customers would understand the contents without ambiguity. - as far as basic networks were concerned the Committee drew special attention to the development of EURO-ISDN, the growth of the supply sector and the greater degree of stability, thanks to which the cost of terminal equipment using this technology would continue to fall and therefore would come within the range of a growing number of users. - stressed the importance of developing broadband wireless networks, especially in those regions where it was not practical to invest in hardwire systems for geographical reasons and so forth. - The Committee hoped that the reports would take account of regional development and of the differences that existed. It appeared to be more equitable to present the general situation of networks serving the information society and of trans-European networks on the basis of the less-favoured regions, rather than on those that were well developed.