Cable television: liberalisation of telecommunications infrastructure and networks. Green paper II

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The ESC recognised that liberalisation of telecommunications infrastructure was extremely important if Europe was to continue to modernise economically and socially. Creating the regulatory framework would also have a decisive influence on the viability of competition, the ability of the European economy to innovate, the range of services upstream and downstream in the telecommunications field, the securing of jobs, and the development of living and working conditions. Liberalised markets had to be regulated in social, economic and technical terms in order to prevent undesirable developments. Such regulation involved a comprehensive universal service that took account of the development of society in Europe. The funding for this had to be assured. The ESC felt that the interests of citizens should take priority alongside technical and commercial interests. For workers, work and training, as well as decent working conditions, formed the basis of an information society that was both progressive and underpinned with social provision. This was the only way that a modern and progressive telecommunications policy would find broad acceptance in Europe and that Europe's economic position would be strengthened in future. The ESC believed that the Commission should set up a panel of experts to examine the effects of liberalisation on the employment situation, with the purpose of cataloguing the social consequences and proposing solutions. If similar studies were being conducted elsewhere in the Commission, they should be made available to this panel of experts. The ESC did not understand why the Commission Decision of 21 June 1995 on the liberalisation of telecommunications infrastructures and cable television networks was based on Article 90(3) of the Treaty. As it was a crucial issue for the future, the Commission was urged to ensure as broad a debate as possible by issuing a proposal for a directive under Article 100a of the Treaty.