Mobile and personal communications

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The ESC welcomed the Commission proposal as the liberalisation of mobile and personal communication services was one of the major outstanding activities of the Commission’s overall strategy to achieve full liberalisation of telecommunications services by 1 January 1998. The ESC expressed to the Commission its concern that competition in the market in telecommunications services be developed in an orderly manner and with regard to the social consequences. It was of the view that the benchmark date of 1 January 1996 should be kept and that those Member States that did have difficulty in meeting that date should be eligible for derogations. With regard to the licensing conditions, the ESC considered that to ensure effective competition in the provision of infrastructures and services, these conditions should be expanded to include: - accounting separation of the business of any operator; - access for mobile operators to the network of any operator on terms at least as favourable as those applicable to any mobile operator owned by it; - likewise with regard to the sale of airtime to any service provider; - prohibition of any unfair cross-subsidies or ‘linked’ sales or any other matter likely to have an anti-competitive effect. Finally, the ESC was pleased to see that subsequent to the publication of this draft Directive the Commission had launched a special investigation into the effects of radio frequency radiation on the health of mobile phone users.