Mobile and wireless communications UMTS: strategy and policy orientations

1997/2128(COS) - 11/12/1997 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

The Committee welcomes the Commission communications as a necessary step paving the way towards a European policy for the establishment of UMTS. It endorses the main areas of consensus identified by the Commission and makes more detailed comments on the following aspects : Frequency spectrum : it is essential to ensure that sufficient spectrum remains available during the transition from GSM, DCS-1800 and PCS-1900 second generation systems. Licences : action in this context must respect the industry expectations that the first UMTS services should enter service around 2002, with widespread global availability anticipated around 2005. To meet this timetable, an EU framework should be established to ensure that the NRAs grant licences through objective, transparent and non-discriminatory licensing procedures with sufficient lead time starting as early as end of 1998. Regulation : Member States will have to take necessary measures to complete the implementation and application of EU legislation and the decisions on frequency issues reached with the European Radiocommunications Committee. In particular, the question of roaming between UMTS and the existing second generation systems needs to be addressed in detail. Standards : cooperation between Commission and EU Member States, and with the relevant organizations both at European and international level, should aim to ensure that the EU adopts a single approach to UMTS. The standardization process must involve full participation of all major industry players representing the manufacturing and operator interests to minimise intellectual property problems. Societal issues : Early solution to societal issues will contribute to the creation of a favourable environment for market growth.