Mutual recognition of declaration and licensing procedures for provision of telecommunications services

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The Committee adopted the report by Mrs Larive on the proposal relating to the mutual recognition of licences and other national permits for the provision of telecommunications services. The proposal in question had already been amended, the previous text having been withdrawn by the Commission, as the method proposed - namely a single Community licence - was not considered to be satisfactory. In the amended proposal, the principle of the general mutual recognition of national licences using a harmonization system based on service categories has now become the primary objective of the new document. Given the complexity of the harmonization process and the time needed to achieve such an objective, the proposal provided for a "single counter" system for the granting of licences, an arrangement which Mrs Larive fully supported. By means of such a mechanism, any potential provider would be allowed to offer his services throughout the entire territory of the Union by means of a single declaration, this scheme applying to those categories of services for which mutual recognition had not yet been gained. The main amendments adopted by the Committee concern: - the inclusion of voice telephony, telex and mobile radio services in the scope of the Directive, - the need to ensure that the process was not harmful to those already operating in this sector, - the setting-up of a European Telecommunications Authority whose role would be to ensure that the minimum regulations required at European level were being applied, - the need to make more transparent and more equitable the conciliation procedure relating to disputes between service providers and national regulatory authorities, - matters relating to third-country service providers and the need to take account of the principle of reciprocity and the extent to which the markets in the country of origin of the said providers were opened-up.