Mobile and wireless communications UMTS: strategy and policy orientations

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The mobile telecommunications sector is developing rapidly at European and world level and is playing an increasingly important in the daily life of more and more people. The GSM mobile telephone standard, normally referred to as second generation mobile telecommunications, has enabled European manufacturers and operators to take a prime position on the world market in mobile telephony and enabled Europe to equip itself rapidly with extensive and high-quality coverage. At the same time, GSM has its clear limitations especially as regards high-speed multimedia services, which is why work now is underway to develop the third generation of systems Universal Mobile Telecommunications System (UMTS). In its report on the Commission Communication on UMTS, drafted by Mr Felipe CAMISÓN ASENSIO (EPP, E), the Committee supports this development and calls for action at the European level to ensure that Europe remains competitive in this field. While recognising that the development of UMTS should be market driven, the Committee believes that a European approach should be taken regarding regulation, standardisation, R&D and international cooperation. The report especially calls on the European Industry to agree as soon as possible on a single standard for UMTS in order to avoid competition between technically incompatible standards. Special attention should also be given to the allocation of frequencies, as these are becoming an increasingly scarce resource in the Information Society. The Committee also underlined the need to explore how UMTS could be used to help the elderly and disabled.