The competitiveness of the European information and communication technologies industries ICT

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The Committee has adopted the report my Mr Norbert GLANTE (PES, D) on the Commission Communication on the Competitiveness of the European Information and Communication Technologies (ICT industries. Recognising that the competitiveness of the ICT industries will be crucial to the future development of the European economy as a whole, the Committee urgently calls on the Commission to draw up an action plan and related measures to promote and support the sector. The Committee considers that the public sector should play a leading part in strengthening the competitiveness of the ICT sector as it can influence key areas through its ability to create demand and its capacity to influence education and training. Therefore, the Committee calls on the Commission and the Member States, in co-operation with the social partners, to draw up and publish European guidelines for skills vital to competitiveness in order both to guarantee the availability of a sufficient number of specialists and to align education and training with the requirements of occupational life and industry's needs. Other key recommendations in the report are: - Co-ordination of legislation to avoid small, fragmented markets within the EU - Measures to improve access to venture capital for small and innovative firms; although the EU can do a lot in this are through the EIB etc., the Committee recognises that this problem ultimately only can be solved by the economic operators. - Even stronger emphasis on ICT-related activities in the Fifth Framework Programme on R&D. - European Action to tackle the millennium bug problem.