

Telecommunications: operator number portability and carrier pre-selection

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The committee unanimously adopted the draft legislative resolution on the Commission's proposal for number portability and carrier preselection in the area of telecommunications. Agreeing with the rapporteur, Mr VAN VELZEN (PSE, NL), the committee endorsed almost all the articles of the proposed directive. However, recalling the European Parliament resolution on the Green Paper, the rapporteur regretted that the Commission had not responded to the wish expressed by Parliament that number portability be introduced into the European mobile telecommunications market as soon as possible; in fact, the Commission was of the opinion that such a move would be premature, in the current phase. In addition, the rapporteur has pointed to certain drawbacks, for example the use of 112 as an emergency number, which is unique throughout the Union. According to Mr van Velzen, it is not possible to obtain this number from a mobile telephone and it appears that in Belgium, regardless of the introduction of the 112 number (which should have been in operation by 31 December 1996 at the latest), police vehicles still use old numbers for emergency calls. The rapporteur has therefore used this opportunity to ask the Commission to investigate the introduction of the 112 number, which in some way anticipates future European telephone space.