

Radio equipment and telecommunication terminal equipment and mutual recognition of their conformity

1997/0149(COD) - 23/09/1998

Placing radio and telecommunications equipment on the market is presently subject to approval by a telecommunications authority or assessment body in the Member States. Although in 1991, a mutual recognition principle was introduced through Directive 91/263/EEC, it failed to reach its full potential because of restrictive implementation in national laws. At the same time the telecommunications market has changed dramatically over the last few years, with lots of new products with relatively short life-cycles - usually below 3 years. As current assessment and approval procedures not unfrequently last up to 18 months, the Commission has put forward a proposal for a more flexible regime based upon manufacturer's self-testing and unilateral declarations of conformity : which is what applies to other technologically similar devices such as TV sets, audio equipment or computers, subject to general safety requirements as well as specific requirements on electro-magnetic compatibility to avoid radio interferences. At first reading Parliament adopted the proposal subject to 19 amendments, more than half of which are wholly or partly included in the Council's Common Position. Council accepted inter alia amendments calling for equipment is designed with the needs of disabled users in mind. In her recommendation for second reading Mel Read (PES, UK) proposes 18 amendments to the Council text. Some of these are amendments from first reading not accepted by Council, others to take into account changes introduced by Council. In particular, the Committee calls for measures to facilitate free movement of equipment by clearly stating the Member States may not prohibit, restrict or impede the use of equipment complying with the Directive. The Committee also calls for further exceptions from the rules as regards equipment used by radio amateurs.