Telecommunications: universal service. 1st monitoring report

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In a follow-up report on the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector the Committee expressed concern that many of the so-called universal service obligations have yet to be fulfilled by member states. Throughout the legislative process towards liberalisation, Parliament has consistently fought for special measures for users with special needs. However, rapporteur Imelda READ (PES, UK) points to several worrying trends in recent years; in particular, the overall cost for maintaing a telephone has gone up for many households as rental charges have risen sharply in several Member States, hitting infrequent users especially hard. In addition, so far Member States have done little to provide special schemes for low-income and disadvantaged users, as required by European legislation. Finally, the Committee was also extremely concerned that the rate of telephone penetration seems to be decreasing in certain Member States, and it called upon the Commission to study the causes of this.