Implementation of Community telecommunications rules. 5th report 1999

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The committee adopted the report by Reino PAASILINNA (PES, FIN) on the Commission's Fifth Report on the telecommunications regulatory package. While welcoming the fact that most Member States had implemented the 1998 regulatory package, the committee pointed out that in some cases implementation was purely formal and not put into practice effectively. It called on the Commission to take steps to ensure that all EU markets were open to competition, to encourage cross-border services and to create a true 'level playing field'. The committee noted that the current regime for licences had resulted in wide variations to such an extent that the setting-up of identical services in different Member States remained subject to legal uncertainty and widely different schedules, and called for measures to be taken to address these problems. As far as the wireless communication market was concerned, it also warned that fees for licenses and authorisations should cover only justified and relevant administrative costs. The report called for operators, particularly incumbents, to provide interconnection on commercial terms and avoid overpricing and other unfair commercial practices vis-à-vis other operators. Continued moves towards deregulation should be taken as competitive activity increased. Other points raised by the committee included the need to protect consumers' interests and to develop a unified system for comparing prices and contract terms, to be made available to consumers through the Internet. The report also stressed the need for regional equality and equal rights for all EU citizens, wherever they reside, in terms of access to new services and universal service provision.