Internet: organisation and management, international and European policy issues 1998-2000.

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The committee adopted the report by Massimo CARRARO (PES, I) welcoming the Commission communication and expressing support for the role played by the Commission within ICANN. The committee nevertheless felt that there was an urgent need for European legislation to impose uniformity on the legislation in force within the EU in areas such as the allocation and protection of domain names and action to combat Internet fraud and ensure security of data. Without such legislation, the coexistence of disparate national laws could severely hamper the development of the Internet in Europe. The committee also called for the common Internet management standards to be adopted to be included in the negotiating package up for discussion with the applicant countries. The report stressed the need for ICANN to be a truly international and neutral organisation, free of all remaining national influence - particularly that of the USA. All five geographical areas covered by ICANN should be represented by democratically-elected representatives on the Board. In this connection, the committee deplored the fact that Africa was not currently represented on the board. The report drew attention to the fact that Europe was lagging behind North America in the telecommunications infrastructure field and called for public and private investment to be channelled into the creation of European backbone transmission networks. Lastly, the committee called for swift action to cut Internet access costs and extend flat-rate charging.