Series of guidelines for trans-European telecommunications networks

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The proposal for a decision aimed to lay down guidelines on the objectives, priorities and main areas of action proposed in the field of trans-European telecommunications networks. The creation of trans-European telecommunications networks had four objectives: - facilitating the transition towards the information society, in particular with a view to satisfying social needs and improving the quality of life; - improving the competitiveness of firms and strengthening the internal market; - strengthening economic and social cohesion; - accelerating the development of new growth-area activities leading to job creation (e.g. multimedia services and electronic information services). The Commission proposed implementing European action in this sector at three levels: the applications layer, the generic services layer and the basic networks layer. The main priorities were as follows: - Applications: a network linking universities and research centres; distance education; health telematics; transport telematics; telematics for the environment; teleworking; telematic services for SMEs; a network for public administrations; electronic procedures for the award of contracts; city information highways; library access services; telematic services for the job market; cultural and linguistic heritage; access for citizens to services; - Generic services: implementation of operational trans-European generic services (electronic mail, file transfers, access to databases, video services); progressive extension of generic services towards a multimedia environment; introduction of non-proprietary digital signature as a basis for open service provision and mobility of use; - Basic networks: ISDN; commercial introduction of Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) and other IBC networks; interoperation of existing and IBC networks. The Union's action would involve the selection of several projects of common interest which could benefit from financial support. These projects of common interest would be selected in successive stages: - the Commission would establish a work programme, in cooperation with sector operators, with a view to determining the sectors in which projects of common interest could be proposed; - on the basis of this programme, it would launch calls for proposals; - the Commission would select the projects of common interest from among the proposals, assisted by a committee composed of representatives of the Member States; - the list of projects retained would be subject to a Council decision. The initiatives for projects should be submitted by the private sector or by an association between the public and private sectors and should address users' needs. Community funding would be largely targeted at the field of applications, and particularly those applications of collective interest.