# Basic telecommunications services: résults of the WTO negociations

1997/0204(CNS) - 15/07/1997 - Legislative proposal

OBJECTIVE: to approve, on behalf of the Community, the results of the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations on basic telecommunications services. SUBSTANCE: Following the negotiations between the Community and its WTO partners, a Fourth Protocol to the General Agreement on Trade in Services was concluded on 15.02.1997, as was a Ministerial Decision on Basic Telecommunications Services. A previous decision required the WTO partners to draw up schedules of specific commitments and exemptions regarding basic telecommunications services. All the partners, including the Community and its Member States, submitted these schedules to the WTO on 14.02.1997. The schedule represents the Community's commitments in this field. As regards the general substance of the commitments, the negotiations resulted in a level of commitments accounting for around 93% of the world market in basic telecommunications services. WTO members representing all continents made commitments on all basic telecommunications services subsectors, either immediately applicable or to be phased in. In addition, most schedules submitted by the partners contain additional commitments on regulatory principles. As regards the Community, the agreement allows the Union's telecommunications industries to benefit from greater legal certainty and predictability than previously. It benefits European industries as a whole as well as European consumers, and constitutes a real basis on which to negotiate further market-opening measures in the future.