Information Society: globalisation and strengthening of the international cooperation

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OBJECTIVE: to examine how multilateral coordination could be developed to meet the new challenges of globalisation and the Information Society. SUBSTANCE: The European Union has made substantial progress in putting in place the necessary conditions for the development of the Information Society, with a view to unleashing its growth and employment potential bringing benefits to all. The dynamism of the Information Society is putting pressure on both public and private sectors to be more flexible and rapidly to take up new challenges. This Communication responds to the need for strengthened international coordination in order to create an enabling framework for the global electronic marketplace ('on-line' economy) which is a fundamental element of the Information Society. To this end the Communication sets out: - the need for an international enabling framework for the emerging global electronic marketplace; - a preliminary analysis of emerging obstacles to this framework covering technical, commercial and legal areas; - a proposal for immediate action to coordinate views on the key obstacles and the most effective means to remove them - building on stronger private sector (including consumer groups) involvement; - a proposal for an International Charter through which parties would agree on a method of coordination between all relevant parties. This Charter, which could be agreed by or in the course of 1999, would: . be legally non-binding; . recognise the work of existing international organisations; . promote the participation of private sector and relevant social groups; . contribute to more regulatory transparency. The next stages will depend on the responses received by the Commission to these proposals.