

Telecommunications: open network provision (ONP) to voice telephony, and universal service

1996/0226(COD) - 20/02/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

In adopting the report by Mrs Imelda READ (PSE, UK) Parliament amended the proposal for a directive on voice telephony and the establishment of a universal service for telecommunications. With its amendments Parliament asks that the Commission regularly examine to what extent further provisions of this Directive can be applied to mobile telephony given the continuing integration of fixed and mobile telecommunications technology. Other amendments also provide that: - Member States may to some extent impose additional universal service requirements; - subscribers have the right, free of charge, to have an entry in publicly available directories and have the possibility to receive compensation in the case of incorrect entry of details in the directories; - subscribers have the right to withhold their details from publicly available directories and to restrict the use of that information for commercial purposes without any charge; - the Commission will develop common rules for monitoring the tariffs and will determine the frequency of the monitoring by the Member States; - the Commission will consider in its report on universal service to be published before 1 January 1998 whether other beneficiaries of the liberalisation process in the telecommunications sector can contribute to the financing of universal service; Another series of amendments seeks to ensure that the most vulnerable consumers and the geographically less favoured areas can benefit from an adequate service in the context of liberalisation. In this connection Parliament demands that: - the Member States take the necessary measures to ensure the availability of social rates and flexible payment schemes for low income consumers and for the provision of public access to information society resources; - free access to services is assured for people with disabilities (blind or partially-sighted, deaf and speech-impaired people, etc.). Lastly, Parliament asks that where number portability is not yet in use, national regulatory authorities shall ensure that a telephone call to his old number can be rerouted to the user against a reasonable fee or that during a reasonable period callers are given an indication of the new number.