Europe's way to the information society: an action plan

1994/2106(COS) - 30/11/1994 - Interim resolution adopted by Parliament

Adopting the report by Mr HERMAN (PPE, B), the European Parliament highlighted the following points: - the change brought about by the transition to the information society would only prove its worth if its overall impact on employment turned out to be positive; - without an adequate framework, the development of information superhighways risked creating a gulf between those who were able to master this technological tool and those who were not and increasing the risks of social exclusion and inequality between regions, between urban and rural areas and between central and peripheral areas, increased isolation of individuals and intrusion into private life; - the need to grant equal importance to social and economic aspects and to respect European cultural specificities, especially in the use of languages on the networks. Clearly, the European Union needed a high-speed telecommunications infrastructure, but only if certain conditions were met, the first being the controlled liberalisation of infrastructures in order to stimulate competition and reduce costs. Parliament called for a legal framework defining principles for protecting young people, social rights and equal opportunities which would apply to the new conditions associated with teleworking, telemedicine and distance learning. It also stressed the need to introduce uniform rules at Community level, especially as regards: - the allocation of licences; - interconnection; - access for users and service providers; - charging; - security and protection; - protection and remuneration of intellectual property etc. Community rules were also needed in order to control concentrations at both infrastructure and service level. The report called for a European regulatory authority to be set up quickly in order to ensure that all these tasks were carried out properly. As far as standards are concerned, the report stressed that it was up to the public authorities to promote standards, both by example and by financial incentive. Finally, it called on the national and Community authorities to play a voluntary role in ensuring that the EU had the relevant applications where social needs could not be satisfied by market forces alone.