Third-generation mobile and wireless communications system UMTS: ccordinated introduction

1998/0051(COD) - 24/09/1998 - Council position

Without altering the basic objective of the initial proposal, the common position of the Council largely accords with the amendments of the European Parliament. The main difference in comparison with the initial proposal lies in the introduction into the text of a certain flexibility so that Member States' freeing of the frequency bands to be used for future mobile and wireless communications can be carried out properly. If they have exceptional technical difficulties in adjusting their national frequency plans, Member States can obtain an extra period of up to 12 months beyond the deadlines of 01/01/2000 and 01 /01/2002 which have been set for establishing an authorisation system and introducing UMTS services. The further amendments to the proposal take account of those of Parliament's amendments which were accepted by the Commission in its amended proposal, and serve to clarify the text: - clear separation from second-generation mobile communication systems; - clear rules on cross-border roaming, distinct from national roaming, which falls within the jurisdiction of the Member States; - Annex I links network capacities to the minimum characteristics listed in Annex I, leaving it to the market to decide on the actual provision of the associated services; - mandates to CEPT/ECTRA to carry out harmonisation, particularly stressing harmonisation of frequencies; - the concept of coordination is now linked to the introduction of UMTS rather than the introduction of national authorisation systems, which will be based on harmonisation where this is required; - adjustments to the text to indicate that most of the requirements will refer to the provision of networks rather than of services, since, in accordance with the Directive on licences, authorisation requirements mostly apply to networks; - reference to market forces for the following points: a) definition of terminal configuration; b) taking account of demand on the market when UMTS is introduced; c) replacement of the conferral of rights and obligations on bodies to negotiate roaming agreements with encouragement by the Member States to organisations to negotiate these agreements.