Telecommunications: future development of the market in directories and other information services

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Adopting the report by Mr Bryan CASSIDY (PPE, UK), the European Parliament supported the liberalization of the market in directories, while insisting on respect for privacy and setting out certain procedures and conditions for liberalization. Parliament drew attention to the following points: - the need to offer adequate protection to consumers and to provide, where the operator has recorded data incorrectly, for the consumer to be compensated for any loss of income and any resultant inconvenience; - protecting consumers from misuse of directory information for criminal purposes; - the option for consumers, free of charge, to withhold their details from public directories or to restrict the use of that information for commercial purposes; - the option for consumers to be given access to the telephone numbers of subscribers in a particular area, even if more than one operator is present; telephone subscribers should be entitled to have free printed copies of their local "white pages" and "yellow pages"; - the telephone directories of the various telecommunications operators should contain the telephone and other telecommunication numbers of each other's subscribers. Parliament also called for: - all operators who planned to be present on the directories' market and other telecommunications information services to contribute to the provision of universal services; - new entrants into the directories market to be given access on fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory terms to the names, addresses and telephone numbers of all telephone customers and for existing operators not to be able to abuse their dominant positions by charging unreasonable prices for the information provided; - the development of pan-European directory and enquiry services either in printed form or in the form of interoperable data bases, and the development of a pan-European directory enquiries number system; - telephone subscribers to be listed in directories free of charge, including the name of their spouse or partner living with them, if they so request; - directory enquiry services to be made available at a nominal charge or on a "cost-plus" basis. Parliament also called for innovative services, such as the French Minitel electronic directory, to be extended to other Member States.