

Telecommunications: interconnection, universal service and interoperability of networks and services, open network provision ONP

1995/0207(COD) - 11/06/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, 3rd reading

In adopting the report by Mrs Imelda READ (PSE, UK), the European Parliament approved the joint text of the Conciliation Committee of the European Parliament and the Council on the directive on interconnection and interoperability of telecommunications networks and services. The compromise mainly concerned the following points: - financing of universal service: it was agreed that the Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) would not be subject to a universal service requirement at this stage, but that such a requirement could be extended to it later; - facilitating market entry for new operators: national regulatory authorities will be able to lay down in advance conditions governing the negotiation of interconnection agreements. Such negotiations must be equitable to new entrants to the market; - interconnection charges: in the case of organizations 'which have significant market power', charges for interconnection must be transparent and based on real costs. National regulatory authorities may request an organization to justify and where appropriate adjust charges and other aspects of their offers; - the setting-up of a European Regulatory Authority: the possibility of setting up such an Authority is to be considered when the Directive is reviewed, taking into account the preparatory work of the Commission, which is to report before the end of 1999; - coordination of positions in international bodies: the Member States must seek to coordinate their positions in international forums and organizations where decisions are taken on numbering; - settlement of crossborder disputes: a procedure for resolving disputes concerning interconnection involving national regulatory authorities is provided for. At the request of one of the parties to a dispute, these authorities must coordinate their efforts to arrive at a solution which strikes a fair balance between the legitimate interests of the parties and respects the national rules applicable. The solution must be arrived at within 6 months; - portability of subscriber numbers: on this controversial subject, the Commission agreed to accept an amendment by Parliament whereby, until it becomes possible for subscribers to retain the same number when changing suppliers, the subscriber should be able to arrange, in return for a reasonable charge, that all calls made to him at the previous company will be transferred to him or that the caller will be informed of his new number without charge. The Council undertook to study the matter on the basis of a Commission proposal. The solution could be incorporated in the text of the directive on voice telephony which is currently being revised; - as regards commitment and on the basis of the *modus vivendi* for informing Parliament, the same solution was adopted as had been negotiated for the directive on voice telephony.