Basic telecommunications services: résults of the WTO negociations

1997/0204(CNS) - 28/11/1997 - Final act

OBJECTIVE: to approve, on behalf of the Community, the results of the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations on basic telecommunications services. COMMUNITY MEASURE: Council Decision 97/838/EC concerning the conclusion, on behalf of the European Community, as regards matters within its competence, of the results of the WTO negotiations on basic telecommunications services. SUBSTANCE: Following the negotiations between the Community and its WTO partners, a fourth protocol to the General Agreement on Trade in Services was concluded on 15.02.1997, as was a decision of the Council for Trade in Services on commitments in basic telecommunications. A previous decision called on WTO partners to draw up a list of specific commitments and exemptions concerning basic telecommunications services. The list notably included the Community's commitments in this respect. At the end of the negotiations, the total level of bilateral commitments represented a cover of some 93% of the world market in basic telecommunications services. These commitments concerned all subsectors of basic telecommunications services and were applicable immediately or in stages. Other commitments concerned regulatory principles. As regards the Community, the Agreement permits the Union's telecommunications industry to enjoy a more secure legal status and greater predictability. The European industry as a whole and European consumers will benefit from the Agreement, which provides a basis for the negotiation of other measures to open up markets in the future. ENTRY INTO FORCE: The protocol enters into force on 01.01.1998 on condition that it has been accepted by all the members concerned.