Telecommunications: universal service in the perspective of a fully liberalized environment

1996/2052(COS) - 12/12/1996 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mrs Pervenche BERES (PSE, F), Parliament considered that the liberalization of telecommunications should be coupled with a strengthening of a universal service. It stressed the fact that the definition of universal service at European level should be as broad as possible in order to avoid disparities between the Member States. The list of universal service provision must be adapted periodically. There must also be the guarantee that local calls of conventional duration can be made at an affordable price, and public access to services must be made available in institutions such as schools and libraries. It asked the Commission therefore to prepare a document on a coherent strategy for universal access. In order to be able to assure correctly the financing of the universal service, Parliament considered that a fund must be established as the only way of providing effective and transparent management. This fund would finance, on the basis of real costs, the expenditure on the provision of universal service and funds would be contributed by all operators of infrastructure and services in proportion to their respective market share and the gross profitability of their revenues. Parliament called on the Commission to submit before the end of 1997 a study to determine whether and to what extent other beneficiaries of the liberalisation process, including new service providers, could contribute to the financing of the universal service.