

Telecommunications: open network provision (ONP) to voice telephony, and universal service

1996/0226(COD) - 26/02/1998 - Final act

OBJECTIVE: to harmonize conditions to ensure open and effective access to fixed public telephone networks, and the conditions for their use in an open and competitive market environment in accordance with the principles of open network provision (ONP). **COMMUNITY MEASURE:** European Parliament and Council Directive 98/10/EC on the application of open network provision (ONP) to voice telephony and on universal service for telecommunications in a competitive environment. **SUBSTANCE:** the Directive amends and replaces Directive 95/62/EC on the application of open network provision (ONP) to voice telephony. Taking account of the new regulatory framework (particularly Directives 97/33/EC and 97/13/EC concerning interconnection and licences respectively), the main purposes of the Directive are to:

- adjust the ONP provisions in force in the light of the liberalized environment, with effect from 01/01/1998, of a market comprising more than one operator, in which special and exclusive rights no longer exist;
- reinforce obligations to provide a universal service such that users throughout the European Union are guaranteed a defined minimum package of services of a specified quality at an affordable price, taking account of the differences which exist between national situations;
- to establish minimum requirements regarding service quality and consumer protection. More particularly, the provisions of the Directive cover the following fields:

- availability of services;
- methods of financing the universal service;
- provision of network connections and access to telephone services;
- directory services;
- public pay-telephones;
- specific measures for disabled users and users with special needs;
- connection of terminal equipment and use of the network;
- contracts;
- publication of and access to information;
- quality of service;
- conditions of access and use and essential requirements;
- itemized billing, tone dialling and selective call barring;
- provision of additional facilities;
- special network access;
- tariff and cost accounting principles;
- non-payment of bills;
- conditions for the termination of offerings.

Under the Directive, certain provisions relating to directory services, contracts, access to information services and emergency services and access to information by consumers, are extended to mobile telephone services. In accordance with the interconnection Directive, Member States may compel voice telephony service operators to contribute to the financing of universal service. **ENTRY INTO FORCE:** 21/04/1998. **DEADLINE FOR TRANSPOSITION:** 30/06/1998.