Transition from analoque to digital broadcasting: an opportunity for the European politics in the audiovisual and cultural divertity areas

2005/2212(INI) - 01/12/2005

The Council welcomes the Communication from the Commission on accelerating the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting. It notes that the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting is a complex process, particularly in respect of terrestrial broadcasting, with social, cultural and economic implications, posing a major challenge for industry, users, and public authorities.

The Council invites the Member States:

- as far as is possible, to complete switchover by 2012;

- to publish by 2006, where they have not already done so, their proposals for switchover and to ensure that any policy interventions are transparent, justified, proportionate, timely and non-discriminatory;

- to ensure adequate coordination with broadcasters and other stakeholders at the national level, within an overall context of a market driven process;

- to ensure there is a strategy to inform consumers about switchover;

- to allow flexibility in their spectrum plans for the introduction of new digital broadcasting and other electronic communications services using the spectrum released by switchover, ensuring fair access for all potential users;

- through the Regional Radio Conference in 2006 (RRC-06) and the future World Radio Conferences to support the option of flexible use of released spectrum, and the adoption of an end-date for the protection of analogue terrestrial television broadcasting services as close as possible to 2012, ensuring that the European Common Proposals (ECPs) take this into consideration.

The Member States and the Commission are invited to:

- continue discussions on how to achieve early switchover;

- engage in an active debate on the usage of the spectrum dividend, including how to meet future demand for pan-European services.

Lastly, the Commission is invited to:

- support Member States' plans to promote digital broadcasting;

- keep updated the information on national switchover plans on its website and to provide to the Communications Committee a regularly updated list of national switchover dates based on information provided by Member States;

- continue to support the development of new and innovative broadcasting and wireless technologies via the EU R&D programmes.