Basic information

1994/2106(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Europe's way to the information society: an action plan **Subject** 3.30.25.02 Information programmes and action plans	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy	HERMAN Fernand H.J. (PPE)	07/09/1994

Former committee responsible	Former rapporteur	Appointed
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy	HERMAN Fernand H.J. (PPE)	07/09/1994

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ENER Research, Technological Development and Energy	PLOOIJ-VAN GORSEL Elly (ELDR)	30/11/1994
JURI Legal Affairs, Citizens' Rights	BARZANTI Roberto (PSE)	22/02/1995
REGI Regional Policy	HALLAM David John Alfred (PSE)	24/05/1995
FEMM Women's Rights	READ Imelda Mary (PSE)	27/06/1995

Former committee for opinion	Former rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
JURI Legal Affairs, Citizens' Rights	BARZANTI Roberto (PSE)	06/10/1994
REGI Regional Policy		

Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meetings	Date
	Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)	1815	1994-12-08
	Industry	1843	1995-04-07
	Telecommunications	1787	1994-09-28
	Telecommunications	1854	1995-06-13

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
19/07/1994	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1994)0347	Summary
28/09/1994	Debate in Council		Summary
14/11/1994	Vote in committee		Summary
14/11/1994	Committee interim report tabled for plenary	A4-0073/1994	
30/11/1994	Debate in Parliament		
08/12/1994	Debate in Council		
12/12/1994	Non-legislative basic document published	SEC(1994)2011	
20/01/1995	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
07/04/1995	Debate in Council		Summary
13/06/1995	Debate in Council		
26/06/1996	Vote in committee		Summary
26/06/1996	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0244/1996	
17/09/1996	Debate in Parliament		
19/09/1996	End of procedure in Parliament		
28/10/1996	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1994/2106(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ECON/4/05869 ECON/4/05866

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee interim report tabled for plenary		A4-0073/1994 OJ C 363 19.12.1994, p. 0002	14/11/1994	
Interim resolution adopted by Parliament		T4-0168/1994 OJ C 363 19.12.1994, p. 0011-0033	30/11/1994	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0244/1996 OJ C 277 23.09.1996, p. 0004	26/06/1996	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0466/1996 OJ C 320 28.10.1996, p. 0126-0164	19/09/1996	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1994)0347	19/07/1994	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	SEC(1994)2011	12/12/1994	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR0021/1995 OJ C 210 14.08.1995, p. 0109	02/02/1995	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0193/1995 OJ C 110 02.05.1995, p. 0037	22/02/1995	Summary

Europe's way to the information society: an action plan

1994/2106(COS) - 28/09/1994

Europe's way to the information society: an action plan

1994/2106(COS) - 22/02/1995 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

Given the convergence of the telecommunications, audiovisual and publishing sectors, the question of media concentration should be regulated before there was any further move in the direction of liberalisation. Adoption of the Commission's proposal for a programme to liberalise services and infrastructure should depend on certain pre-conditions first being fulfilled in such fields as: * the establishment of a stable and legal regulatory framework, particularly with regard to: - media concentration and ownership; - the definition and preservation of the concept of universal service; - privacy; - intellectual property rights; - legal protection and security; - the audiovisual sector: ethical considerations; information; culture; - standardisation, interoperability; - tariffs (equalisation, cross-subsidisation); * the harmonisation and development of EURO-ISDN, an integrated broadband network, and IDA so as not to compromise the development of public interest and other applications. The ESC believed that an immediate start should be made on analyses of the social and economic risks and challenges involved in the transition to the information society and on measures to obviate and limit such risks. In particular, it called for: - the immediate establishment of a Group of Experts, which would include all social and economic interests; - studies to evaluate the investment needed to set up and operate information highways and new services, and to assess the effect on employment; - studies of the structural impact and effect on employment of new information and communication services, with particular regard to possible new applications in banks, commercial enterprises, mail-order firms, travel agents, transport firms and enterprises in the media industry; - the development and testing of rules governing layout and security in connection with the regional pilot projects. The findings of the studies, and the lessons learnt from the projects, should be made public and applied when further measures were drawn up to ease the transition to the information

society. The findings and experiences should also be submitted to the European institutions and to all social and economic interests for their opinions, before final decisions were taken on appropriate measures. At the same time as getting to grips with the social consequences of the new technologies, there was also a case for studying needs so that the information society could satisfy the real demands of European society and not merely supply services that offered immediate financial gain. A detailed timetable should be fixed for debating these crucial questions in advance of the proposed deadlines for the liberalisation of all services whilst the deadlines in question should be adjusted in the light of the studies that needed to be carried out into the social implications. In view of the uncertainties surrounding current changes, governments and civil society should be allowed a reasonable length of time for reflection and the possible endorsement of a democratic regulatory body at Community level. The ESC emphasised that it might itself have a democratic role to play in such a body. It stressed that it was necessary for Member States to ensure that the decisions adopted by collective agreement at EU level were implemented at national level. The way in which the transition to the information society was organised was of great importance to the further economic and social modernisation of Europe and would play a decisive role in helping to safeguard and strengthen European firms' ability to innovate, determine future production and employment, and further develop working and living conditions. In the view of the ESC, it was necessary: 1. to use industrial, research, technological and training policy measures to further corporate restructuring and satisfy new skill requirements. Measures adopted under the current Fourth Framework Programme, as well as Structural Fund support programmes (particularly Objective 4), should be problem-oriented. 2. to make sure that, when setting up and operating new communication and information networks (information highways), attention was focused not only on technical and economic aspects but also on: - ensuring that the public had access to basic information services and that there was no discrimination regarding access to new systems and services, - ensuring sufficient diversity of information, - making allowance for the special protection that cultural and democratic values should enjoy,- guaranteeing the confidentiality of personal data and information security and preventing the misuse of economic power for political ends. For these reasons there was a case for adopting 'traffic rules' for information highways. The prerequisite for this was the existence of a basic information and communications service to which all citizens had access. 3. to ease the transition to the information society of the future by creating new areas of potential demand. This would involve the development and operation of new information and communication systems and services that tapped the interests of society at large and served employment, social and environmental policy objectives. 4. to use the development of communication and information infrastructure within the framework of local pilot projects as an opportunity to initiate responsible economic and social developments. By means of social dialogue, social and economic interests should also be involved in shaping the future information society with a view to drawing up and testing the social acceptability of traffic rules for new networks and services, and promoting basic and advanced vocational training related to the application of new information and communication equipment, systems and services. 5. to take account of the globalisation of information. This was why the ESC emphasised the need to draw up clear, stable rules that would pave the way for the worldwide exchange of information with due regard to the requirements governing fair competition, the protection of privacy, security, and intellectual property. The ESC reserved the right to re-examine the problems linked to the information society as the subject matter was in a state of flux.

Europe's way to the information society: an action plan

1994/2106(COS) - 30/11/1994 - Interim resolution adopted by Parliament

Adopting the report by Mr HERMAN (PPE, B), the European Parliament highlighted the following points: - the change brought about by the transition to the information society would only prove its worth if its overall impact on employment turned out to be positive; - without an adequate framework, the development of information superhighways risked creating a gulf between those who were able to master this technological tool and those who were not and increasing the risks of social exclusion and inequality between regions, between urban and rural areas and between central and peripheral areas, increased isolation of individuals and intrusion into private life; - the need to grant equal importance to social and economic aspects and to respect European cultural specificities, especially in the use of languages on the networks. Clearly, the European Union needed a high-speed telecommunications infrastructure, but only if certain conditions were met, the first being the controlled liberalisation of infrastructures in order to stimulate competition and reduce costs. Parliament called for a legal framework defining principles for protecting young people, social rights and equal opportunities which would apply to the new conditions associated with teleworking, telemedicine and distance learning. It also stressed the need to introduce uniform rules at Community level, especially as regards: - the allocation of licences; - interconnection; - access for users and service providers; - charging; - security and protection; - protection and remuneration of intellectual property etc. Community rules were also needed in order to control concentrations at both infrastructure and service level. The report called for a European regulatory authority to be set up quickly in order to ensure that all these tasks were carried out properly. As far as standards are concerned, the report stressed that it was up to the public authorities to promote standards, both by example and by financial incentive. Finally, it called on the national and Community authorities to play a voluntary role in ensuring that the EU had the relevant applications where social needs could not be satisfied by market forces alone.

Europe's way to the information society: an action plan

1994/2106(COS) - 02/02/1995 - Committee of the Regions: opinion

The Committee expressed its support for the Commission Communication and made the following comments: - it endorsed the liberalisation of telecommunications infrastructure and services for its potential to improve the quality of life of citizens; - it pointed out that the relevant powers of the Member States, particularly their powers to regulate the media and broadcasting, should be preserved; - it would make such liberalisation dependent on the prior and effective guarantee of universal service in strict compliance with the principle of economic and social cohesion; - it considered that a rigorous study should be made of the impact of applications in the social, economic and cultural spheres so that suitable measures could be adopted to ensure that the transition to the new information society was socially acceptable. It considered that the principle of ensuring universal provision of essential public information regardless of the citizen's ability to pay should be embraced by local and regional bodies in preparing for and consolidating the information society. It offered itself as a potential basis for the development of an information network connecting the local and regional authorities of Europe .

Europe's way to the information society: an action plan

1994/2106(COS) - 07/04/1995

The Council listened with great interest to a statement by Mr BANGEMANN on the progress made with action to encourage development of the information society and on the measures taken by the Commission to ensure a follow-up to the G7 Ministerial meeting on 25 and 26 February 1995 and, in particular, implementation of the pilot projects decided on. The Council stressed the importance of applications of general interest and those concerning SMEs for establishing the information society and for industry in Europe , which should be given development incentives as quickly as possible. The Council therefore welcomed the fact that the Commission would be forwarding a communication defining the approach to be adopted for developing applications of the information society that are fully in line with the policy of making the Union industrially competitive, together with a draft Decision on implementation of trans-European telecommunications networks. (COD0498)

Europe's way to the information society: an action plan

1994/2106(COS) - 19/07/1994 - Non-legislative basic document

This Commission communication lists a series of measures and a timetable for implementing the information society. This action plan covers four main areas: 1) Regulatory framework: - liberalization of infrastructures: in order to speed up the current liberalization of the telecommunications sector, an agreement in principle must be reached on the liberalization of infrastructures in the telecommunications sector and clear implementation dates must be set. A communication will be presented in September 1994 and a Green Paper on the infrastructures will be published before the end of the year; - European authority: the question of setting up a European authority will be discussed with the Member States with a view to tabling proposals by January 1996; - standardization: the Commission will start a debate with a view to publishing a communication on the widespread use of standardization in information and telecommunication technologies. A major seminar, to which all interested parties are invited, will be held in November 1994, on the basis of which the Commission will launch suitable projects during 1995; - interconnection of networks and interoperability of services: the Commission will update the ONP (open network provision) framework, concentrating on the interconnection rules between existing and new service providers, the entities concerned and standard interfaces between networks and services, in order to offer fair and open access to networks. The Commission will submit proposals by the end of 1995 and calls on the Council and the European Parliament to adopt the ISDN and IDA (interchange of data between administrations) TEN programmes by the end of 1994; - tariffs: cost-based prices are one of the objectives which the Commission has set itself in order to safeguard the transition to a competitive environment. Binding directives exist but have not been fully transposed by the Member States and the Commission is therefore starting infringement proceedings; - funding the universal service: the Commission will present a report by the end of 1995 and will develop common principles for taxing access in this context; - global dimension: the Commission is involved in negotiations on basic telecommunications services within the framework of a general agreement on trade and services (GATS) and in discussions in the new World Trade Organization and World Intellectual Property Organization. Bilateral discussions with countries such as Japan and Canada will be extended to the subject of the information society. The G7 in Naples has agreed to organize a conference of ministers in Brussels at the end of 1994 in order to discuss the development of an open, competitive and integrated world information infrastructure; - intellectual property rights: the Commission will re-examine existing measures and present a Green Paper over coming months; - privacy: the Commission will try to get the framework directive on data protection adopted by the autumn; - electronic protection, legal protection and security: the Commission is preparing a Green Paper on the legal protection of coded transmissions on the internal market. It will examine the Member States' legislation on unauthorized access in order to see if it needs to be harmonized and decide on the appropriate level of intervention. As regards security, the Commission will submit a supplementary proposal on coding requirements in the world of business and commerce and on the integrity of signatures by September 1994. It will present a communication on information security and explore ways of cooperating with third countries on coding, especially the USA; - media ownership: the Commission will shortly present a communication on the follow-up to the Green Paper on pluralism and the concentration of the media on the internal market; - competition: competition rules represent a positive contribution to the implementation of the information society and the Commission will take account of new, emerging global markets when applying these rules; - audiovisual: a proposal for revising the 1989 "Television without frontiers" directive will be submitted shortly. 2) Networks, basic services, applications and content: Support needs to be given to new private-sector partnerships which will play a key role in the implementation of the information society. - Euro-ISDN: the Commission's proposals on the ISDN TEN should be adopted by the end of 1994; - integrated wide-band communications (IBC): the Commission will encourage the creation of a European wide-band communications steering committee comprising the main actors; - mobile communications: the Commission will present a report on the results of consultations on its Green Paper by the end of 1994 and will make provision for measures for each of these markets in 1995; - satellite communications: the Commission will shortly adopt a directive liberalizing satellite telecommunications equipment and services. The Council and the European Parliament should adopt a directive on the mutual recognition of licences for satellite services by the end of 1994; - basic services: the Commission will launch a European forum of basic services and set up a group in charge of examining the standardization of Internet and ISO protocols; - implementation of projects: during the initial stage, the Commission will set up an information society projects office; - funding: the private sector will fund the information society, but the Commission will ensure that existing funds (RDT framework programme, trans-European networks, Structural Funds) are used as efficiently as possible; - audiovisual: the follow up to the Green Paper on the audiovisual sector will address both the regulatory aspects (promotion of European programmes) and mechanisms to encourage the sector (MEDIA). 3) Social, societal and cultural aspects: The Commission will set up a high-level panel to advise on the following aspects: employment and working environment (creation of new jobs), societal aspects (daily life, leisure), cultural aspects and linguistic aspects. The Commission will publish a communication on the European linguistic challenge and the new language industry by January 1995. 4) Promotion: a series of promotional activities has been planned in order to raise public awareness of the information society from autumn 1994 onwards.

Europe's way to the information society: an action plan

1994/2106(COS) - 19/09/1996 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Fernand HERMAN (PPE, B), Parliament reaffirmed a series of principles: information is not just an ordinary commodity and public authority has to guarantee its availability and pluralism; the information society must reduce the risks of a two-tier society and not increase them; it is necessary to set up a European Regulatory Authority and a strong regulatory framework. It also highlighted the role of the European Union (regulation, R & D and industrial policy measures) and the spheres of activity (in particular, public-interest activities such as health care, education and

fighting social exclusion). It emphasized the role of the public authorities which have, inter alia, to guide, encourage and coordinate investment initiatives in agreement with the private sector, promote European standards enabling interconnection, encourage the dissemination of multimedia products on a pan-European scale, while taking into account specific linguistic and cultural characteristics, and formulate uniform rules for the control of concentrations. The adopted report addresses four areas: societal consequences and rights of the citizen; industrial policy and telecommunications; legal aspects, and intellectual property. In this connection, Parliament: - called on the Commission to launch a survey, based on the criterion of gender, to evaluate the impact of the information society in Europe on women and men in economic, social and political life, the availability of Internet to women and men, the influence of women on the introduction of the information society, and the influence of the latter on the nature and scope of job opportunities; - asked, however, for a detailed assessment of the danger threatening freedom of association and trade-union representation because of decentralization and the individualization of employment relationships; - called for an appropriate legal framework for information production, distribution and use which takes due account of the right to intellectual property (copyright and neighbouring rights) in accordance with Continental rules; - called for a comparative survey on the effects of teleworking on the health of teleworkers and for safety criteria to be incorporated in a code of good practice; - considered that it is essential to clarify the legal employment status of teleworkers and that it is necessary to adopt legislative provisions; - called for a specific directive granting teleworkers a legal employment status. In relation to industrial policy, Parliament stressed the need to ensure low-cost communications. Though liberalization could contribute to this objective, while increasing the supply of state-of-the-art products, it should not be based solely on the rules of competition but must be accompanied by a policy fostering universal service so as to encourage access to telecommunications services and contents for all citizens. At international level it should not lead to an opening up of the European markets to third-country operators without reciprocity, both as regards contents and as regards networks and services. As a practical measure, the EP called for Community information to be disseminated free of charge on line and in all the official languages.