Basic information

1996/2170(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Living and working in the information society: people first. Green Paper **Subject** 3.30.25 International information networks and society, internet	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy	SOLTWEDEL-SCHÄFER Irene Barbara Lilia (V)	21/11/1996
JURI Legal Affairs, Citizens' Rights	BERGER Maria (PSE)	19/11/1996

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Industry	1953	1996-10-08
Social Affairs	1948	1996-09-24

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
24/07/1996	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1996)0389	Summary
24/09/1996	Debate in Council		
08/10/1996	Debate in Council		
23/10/1996	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
06/02/1997	Vote in committee		Summary
06/02/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0045/1997	
10/03/1997	Debate in Parliament		
11/03/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
14/04/1997	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1996/2170(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	EMPL/4/08165

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0045/1997 OJ C 085 17.03.1997, p. 0005	06/02/1997	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0083/1997 OJ C 115 14.04.1997, p. 0018-0036	11/03/1997	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1996)0389	24/07/1996	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR0365/1996 OJ C 116 14.04.1997, p. 0081	15/01/1997	
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0456/1997 OJ C 206 07.07.1997, p. 0010	23/04/1997	Summary

Living and working in the information society: people first. Green Paper

1996/2170(COS) - 24/07/1996 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE : This Green Paper is part of a series of four communications and proposals concerning the Information Society. Its purpose is to fuel the debate on the social issues raised by the transition to the Information Society by focusing on the key issues of organization of work, employment and social cohesion. SUBSTANCE: The Green Paper is largely based on the work of the two consultative bodies set up by the Commission last year, i.e. the High-Level Group of Experts and the Information Society Forum. Whilst acknowledging the job-creation opportunities presented by information and communication technologies (ICTs), it also recognizes that people are understandably worried and that action should be taken to respond to their concerns about the forecast changes. The Green Paper looks in particular at the way in which ICTs are going to reshape the organisation of work and production and how they are going to transform working life. If the new system of organizing work is to create jobs, it must be based on a combination of ICTs and education and training, the latter being an area which the Green Paper says needs to be substantially overhauled. Moreover, ICTs require new skills which the labour market has not delivered quickly enough. Investment in human resources must therefore be at the heart of employment policy. The Green Paper also indicates that ICTs can play an important role in regional and local development and help promote integration and empowerment. The Information Society should be about people and should not create inequalities between the information rich and the information poor. Moreover, local and regional authorities ought to play a part in the process through local and regional employment pacts to ensure a more employment-intensive and more human resource oriented cohesion policy. In view of this, the Commission takes the view that public policies should: - strengthen the capacity of the EU to create jobs, ensure that SMEs take full advantage of the Information Society and improve cohesion across the Member States and regions by using the potential of ICTs; - improve democracy and social justice by ensuring that citizens participate actively in

building the Information Society; - incorporate more ambitious targets in equal opportunities policies, at work and in the home, by paying special attention to ICT training for young people; - remove the barriers which hinder disadvantaged social groups so that they have the opportunity to acquire a better command of ICTs; - support people with special needs so as to enable them to improve their quality of life; - improve the efficiency of public administration and overall service provision, e.g. in health care and education. The Commission invites interested parties to submit their comments on all these issues by 31/12/1996.

Living and working in the information society: people first. Green Paper

1996/2170(COS) - 11/03/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Wim van VELZEN (PSE, NL) on the Commission's Green Paper Parliament called on the Commission to draw up an action programme on the social impact of the information society which was as complete and balanced as possible. Taking the view that the Green Paper concentrated on work, jobs and the competitiveness of the economy and placed the human dimension of the information society in second place, the report considered that the convergence criteria and the stability pact made it particularly difficult to achieve a social equilibrium. It called therefore on the Commission and the Member States to draw up a framework for a reduction of working time and a better distribution of work and more scope for training. The Commission was called on to submit before the end of the year a proposal on teleworking and associated problems concerning social security, health and safety, privacy and taxation. It was also called on to intensify its efforts to draw up a European fiscal policy in order to reduce the current burden of tax on labour and to develop new forms of taxation in the light of the global information society. Parliament emphasized that access to the networks was of prime importance and that non-discrimination, interoperability, protection of privacy and non-impediment by language differences should be considered as basic principles. The report suggested the launching of a computer literacy campaign in which young people familiar with computers pass on their knowledge to the rest of the population, in particular young unemployed persons, immigrants, housewives and the elderly. The Commission and the Member States should consider the concept of a diploma with 'maintenance contract' enabling persons completing a course of study to update their know-how and skills at regular intervals. In general Parliament considered that a study should be undertaken on the impact of introducing new technologies into education for different age groups.

Living and working in the information society: people first. Green Paper

1996/2170(COS) - 23/04/1997 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

The Committes agrees with many of the green paper's points. However, it regrets to note the following: Too little attention is focused on daily life, an area where ICTs exercise a powerful attraction, offering the prospect of huge markets and therefore jobs. The Committee has already called for studies to evaluate the investment needed to set up and operate information highways and new services, and to assess the effect on employment. It would be logical to ensure that the discussion encompasses the impact of ICTs as a means to an end, with all the advantages and risks they entail, in an attempt to neutralize those risks or minimize their effects in advance. Following the Dublin colloquium, the Commission began consulting the organizations with which it is in regular contact. The Committee would be most interested in seeing the results of the consultation. It hopes that provision has been made for some feedback to the bodies and individuals who have answered the Commission's call. A European employment observatory, constantly covering the positive and negative effects of ICTs, would help greatly in taking predictive decisions. ICTs are accused of encouraging business relocations. On the other hand, they also contribute to the renovation of national or European problem areas and to safeguard or create jobs. ICTs have made teleworking possible: this is the ideal solution for some, but can have the undesirable effect of creating or aggravating a feeling of isolation. Hence the importance of objective information and case-by-case advice. ICTs have also enabled new forms of home shopping to be developed. This poses problems for certain types of customer, who must be protected against unfair practices and hasty decisions. SMEs do not have the resources available to large companies to make use of certain types of ICTs. The ESC has two wishes: firstly, that in relation to ICTs, SMEs receive assistance in terms of advice, training and equipment and secondly, that consideration be given to the possibility of establishing forms of partnership between them and experienced businesses. The Committee has always advocated appropriate, up-to-date training at the earliest stage. It shares the green paper's concerns and endorses its proposals. ICTs must be built into curricula at every stage of education as a tool. The Committee highlights the importance of analysing companies' and people's needs. The ESC would recall its earlier positions and comments, particularly: its opinion on the revamping of the directive on television without frontiers (particularly paragraphs 2.2, 3.16 et seq.); its opinion on the Media II programme. In an opinion on the Communication from the Commission "Europe's way to the information society: An action plan", adopted in 1995, the Committee considered that "the Commission's proposed timetable for the liberalization of (telecommunications(infrastructure cannot reasonably be introduced without having first clearly defined the concept of universal service - including the reasons for it, the stakes involved, the safeguard mechanisms that go with it, its development, and the financial arrangements". The Committee notes that the content of the universal service is only now being specified and that the funding, apart from that for a hesitantly-defined universal service, will not be provided by operators. The Committee endorses the green paper's concluding argument on the need to strengthen all expressions of pluralism at all levels.