Basic information

1997/2021(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Economic and social cohesion and information society **Subject** 3.30.25 International information networks and society, internet 4.70 Regional policy	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
REGI Regional Policy	SIERRA GONZÁLEZ Angela del Carmen (GUE/NGL)	27/02/1997

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy	PAASILINNA Reino (PSE)	22/04/1997

Council of the European Union

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
22/01/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1997)0007	Summary
30/01/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
25/11/1997	Vote in committee		Summary
25/11/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0399/1997	
13/01/1998	Debate in Parliament		
15/01/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
02/02/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1997/2021(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	REGI/4/08578

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0399/1997 OJ C 014 19.01.1998, p. 0005	25/11/1997	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0027/1998 OJ C 034 02.02.1998, p. 0121-0145	15/01/1998	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1997)0007	22/01/1997	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0982/1997 OJ C 355 21.11.1997, p. 0012	01/10/1997	Summary
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR0270/1997 OJ C 064 27.02.1998, p. 0020	19/11/1997	

Economic and social cohesion and information society

1997/2021(COS) - 01/10/1997 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

Given the importance of information and communication technologies (ICT) and the extent to which the EU lags behind its competitors, particularly the US and Japan, there is a vital need for the EU to formulate a strategy for boosting its commitment to and achievements in ICT. This requires a comprehensive approach in which the different facets of the information society, including its effects on cohesion, are recognized. In its general comments the Committee thus welcomes the fact that the Commission advocates the establishment of a policy on the information society and it goes on to specifically examine how the need for cohesion is to be taken into account. The Committee does, however, take the view that the Commission fails to pay adequate attention to the problem of the extent to which the EU is lagging behind the US and Japan. The Committee argues that support should normally be limited to public investment and that there should be clear guidelines for how the money is used. The Committee also considers the concept of universal service, which is a crucial aspect of the information society. It calls upon the Commission to refine the concept of universal service and to explore how it can best be made more readily operational. The Committee believes that new opportunities have been provided for the regions; it is essential that the Commission sets out specific measures to enable these opportunities to be exploited, distinguishing between opportunities requiring expenditure, and those not requiring expenditure, whilst taking account of the cultural and social diversity of the regions of the EU. The Committee calls on the Commission to appraise the consequences for cohesion of anticipated developments in telecommunications and to put forward, in liaison with the economic and social partners, proposals for linking these developments to cohesion policies.

Economic and social cohesion and information society

1997/2021(COS) - 22/01/1997 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: this communication complements the Green Paper 'Living and Working in the information society - People first'. It seeks to present a series of initiatives so that all the regions of the Union, including the less-favoured ones, can benefit from the Information Society. SUBSTANCE: for the Commission, the first condition for active participation in the information society rests in the ease of access of institutions, companies and households whatever their location. Analysis of the statistical data available indicates that a large gap exists between the richest regions and the less favoured regions of the Union at the level of basic infrastructure provision, the cost and reliability of services and the availability of advanced services. In order to reduce the disparities and improve economic and social cohesion this communication recommends several measures in relation to regulatory activity, investment in infrastructures and stimulation of demand: 1) Member States must adapt their regulatory framework and in particular: - continue the current debate on the scope of universal service and on the concept of public access in the information society in order to achieve greater involvement of individuals, SMEs, community organizations, educational institutions, regions and local communities; - provide for early completion of the liberalisation process; - explore licensing regimes with a view to integrating coverage targets including less favoured regions; 2) It is recommended that Member States should: - give priority to the completion and upgrading of the telecom networks, identifying the link between investment and regional performance; - adopt a strategic and integrated approach to the information society in partnership with regional and local authorities; - establish public /private partnerships, where necessary, so as to involve the private sector; - launch a range of initiatives (including within the framework of the Structural Funds) in the areas of education, training and work organization; 3) For its part the Commission intends to: - develop further its policy on universal service in the context of its legislative initiative; - increase the coherence of its actions in particular in the relation between the 4th Framework Programme for RTD and the Structural Funds and ensure that the needs of users continue to be truly represented in the 5th Framework Programme for RTD; - prepare for Spring 1997 a communication describing the set of actions to be undertaken as a follow-up to the consultation and debate process on the Green Paper 'Living and working in the Information Society'; - grant technical assistance to Member States for promoting new ACTs, including electronic commerce, and increase the access of SMEs; - continuously support the actions of Member States in the framework of the Structural Funds.

Economic and social cohesion and information society

1997/2021(COS) - 15/01/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mrs Angela del Carmen SIERRA GONZALEZ (GUE/NGL, E), the European Parliament expressed the view that applications for less-developed regions should be geared to the development of integrated systems to meet basic human needs, particularly in rural areas and island and outlying communities, and concentrate on universal access and local content, with equal attention being devoted to the development of the physical infrastructure and of human resources. As regards access to the Internet, in particular, Parliament called for easily accessible workstations in publicly accessible places of collective interest (libraries, schools, chambers of commerce, recreational centres, etc); this implied that the inclusion of ISDN as a component of the universal service must be envisaged in the short term. In order to protect the interests of less-favoured regions of the Union, Parliament called for state and regional funding to be used to ensure the full participation of these areas in the information society, and called on the Commission to make available specific across-the-board budgetary resources to promote cohesion. Parliament called on the Commission to step up international cooperation and also to assist the countries which were approaching accession in preparing for the information society and to improve communications with other regions in order to promote the global information society.