Basic information

2005/2212(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Transition from analoque to digital broadcasting: an opportunity for the European politics in the audiovisual and cultural divertity areas **Subject** 3.30.04 Radiocommunications, broadcasting 3.30.06 Information and communication technologies, digital technologies	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
CULT Culture and Education	WEBER Henri (PSE)	23/11/2005

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy	2695	2005-12-01

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Communications Networks, Content and Technology	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
17/11/2005	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
01/12/2005	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
21/03/2006	Vote in committee		Summary
23/03/2006	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0075/2006	
27/04/2006	Decision by Parliament	T6-0154/2006	Summary
27/04/2006	Results of vote in Parliament		
27/04/2006	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2005/2212(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CULT/6/31688

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE367.921	03/02/2006	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE369.935	27/02/2006	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0075/2006	23/03/2006	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0154/2006	27/04/2006	Summary

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.

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

2005/2212(INI) - 27/04/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Henri WEBER (PES, FR) on the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting. Parliament felt that that the new audiovisual technologies should, above all, make it possible to deliver media pluralism and broadcast high-quality programmes which would be accessible to an ever-increasing number of citizens. It was essential that the development of the information society as a whole, including audiovisual services, should be socially, regionally, culturally and linguistically balanced and that, to avoid new forms of exclusion, and in particular the 'digital divide', all citizens must be assured of the possibility of taking advantage of the benefits of the information society. Parliament recommended that, to prevent adverse social repercussions, the measures accompanying the switchover must focus primarily on the interoperability of platforms and standards, and thus on the interests of citizens and consumers.

National action plans and specific measures: Parliament made a series of recommendations to Member States regarding specific measures to be adopted at national level, inter alia: the transition should not involve increased costs for the consumer, or any loss of service; efforts must be made to educate the public about digital technologies ('digital literacy'); and particular attention should be paid to access for people with disabilities.

At Union level:Parliament again emphasised the importance ofadapting national education systems to the cultural and social changes brought about by new technologies, convergence and digitisation. It also spoke of the importance of harmonising copyright in order to combat piracy, which is facilitated by digital technology. In view of the social and political impact of programme content, action should be taken to ensure:

- media pluralism by means of legislation at European and national level to guarantee that freedom of information and freedom of expression are upheld, together with the independence and editorial freedom of the media vis-à-vis those wielding political and economic power,

- an adequate level of competition and diversification of media ownership and strict separation between the political authorities and the interests of media and electronic communications groups.

The Commission was asked to launch a debate at European level on pluralism and the concentration of media ownership, with a Green Paper on the subject.

Furthermore, it is the Commission's task to support the Member States in the event of public-sector intervention, by clarifying the conditions under which public-sector intervention is compatible with EC competition law. However, any such public intervention must not distort competition, be discriminatory or place individual market players in a privileged position.

Parliament pointed out that public-service broadcasting had an obligation to ensure access for all. This remit will become increasingly difficult owing to the fragmentation of distribution networks and methods of access. The provisions on preferential access to distribution networks for services which have a universal access obligation and, in particular, the 'must carry' rules must therefore continue to play an important role after the transition, and contribute to media pluralism.

Public audiovisual services:Parliament stressed that, without appropriate funding, public service broadcasters competing with large groups - particularly telecommunications groups - entering the audiovisual market would not be able to remain strong and independent and continue to attract audiences, or generate sufficient resources to fulfil their remit. Placing a strong and independent public service broadcasting system in jeopardy involves risks to pluralism, freedom of expression, cultural diversity, access to audiovisual services and democracy itself.