



Address by Luc Chatel, current president of the Telecommunications Council to the European Parliament on 3 September: "Telecommunications, an example of the human face of Europe"

Luc Chatel, the French Minister of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs and current president of the Telecommunications Council, addressed the European Parliament on 3 September, ahead of the plenary session devoted to the revision of the European regulatory framework for electronic communications on 23 September. He underlined the strategic importance of this revision, not only for the economy, but also for the dissemination of knowledge among European citizens: "Telecommunications are an example of the human face of Europe" indicated Chatel.

- Concerning incentives to invest in new networks (extremely high-speed networks), Chatel particularly emphasised the need to continue promoting competition, while encouraging risk-sharing between operators, as recommended in a report by Catherine Trautmann (PSE), the rapporteur for the 'Telecoms package';
- On the harmonisation of European regulations and the question of creating a European regulatory authority for electronic communications, the president of the Council presented the Council's reservations on over-strengthening the powers of the European Commission and its wish to maintain strong cooperation between regulators. This should allow the Council to find a balance between institutionalising a body bringing together European regulators and creating of a Community body with guaranteed independence;
- On the improvement of the management of the spectrum, the Council shared Parliament's wish to strengthen the flexibility of mechanisms for allocating frequencies. Chatel also specified that the Council had taken note of the MEPs' request to be more involved in defining general guidelines with regard to frequency management;
- On the strengthening of consumer protection, Chatel welcomed Parliament's proposals aimed at providing more detailed information which should be included in contracts and reinforcing measures in favour of users with handicaps. He also welcomed the proposed improvements for reducing number portability delays and for combating unsolicited messages sent via SMS. The debate should stop "opposing containers and content". Moreover, personal data as well as copyright should be protected, while fostering the dissemination of European creativity.

The European Parliament's vote on the 'Telecoms package' should allow substantial progress to be made on this text under the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union.