


Procedure file

Basic information		
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	2000/2074(COS)	Procedure completed
Digital television: use of standards for the transmission of signals		
Subject 3.30.02 Television, cable, digital, mobile		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy		07/12/1999
		ELDR THORS Astrid	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Telecommunications	2228	30/11/1999
European Commission	Commission DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology	Commissioner	

Key events			
10/11/1999	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1999)0540	Summary
30/11/1999	Debate in Council	2228	
15/05/2000	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
25/05/2000	Vote in committee		Summary
25/05/2000	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0143/2000	
13/06/2000	Debate in Parliament		
13/06/2000	Decision by Parliament	T5-0257/2000	Summary
13/06/2000	End of procedure in Parliament		
01/03/2001	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2000/2074(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper

Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ITRE/5/12245

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		COM(1999)0540	10/11/1999	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0143/2000 OJ C 067 01.03.2001, p. 0009	25/05/2000	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0257/2000 OJ C 067 01.03.2001, p. 0023-0050	13/06/2000	EP	Summary

Digital television: use of standards for the transmission of signals

PURPOSE : Commission Communication reporting on technical and market developments for digital television. CONTENT : This communication takes place in the context of reporting requirements of Directive 95/47/EC. - After discussing the importance of pay-TV in the development of digital television, the Communication goes on to say that the role of competition law is an important factor in the development of the market. The strength of free-to-air services in some Member States has made it hard to launch digital television through pay-TV. The large investments necessary have led to ventures with a high risk of market foreclosure. The structure of most broadcasting markets makes it hard for competition authorities to accept any new combination of existing players to address new markets. - There is a need for a broader approach to infrastructure, transmission and access. In markets where cable is the main means of delivery, access to networks has been a significant bottleneck for pay television operators. - The switchover from analogue must be realised in a competition neutral way, given that consumers will have to pay for new receiving equipment. Consumer choice should not be prejudiced. - Consumers will need very good quality information in order to make decisions that have traditionally been made by other market actors and regulators. - The relative market positions of free-to-air and pay television in the longer term is uncertain. Various market forecasts indicate that pay-TV subscription revenues are growing faster than advertising revenues. Regulation should not hinder market development, notably of innovative new services.?

Digital television: use of standards for the transmission of signals

The committee adopted the report by Astrid THORS (ELDR, FIN) on the Commission communication on digital television drawn up in the context of the 1995 directive on the use of standards for the transmission of television signals. The report noted that, as the technology and markets had evolved beyond the scope of the directive, it should be adapted to cover in particular the new bottlenecks/gateways in the distribution of digital TV. A balance needed to be struck between fulfilling obligations to ensure diversity of culture and content in TV networks and at the same time not putting too many restrictions on the development of the industry. The committee called for open access for digital TV, similar to the open network provision (ONP) in the telecommunications sector, and for a policy guaranteeing that different systems of access to the digital TV world were interoperable at consumer level. It also pointed out that broadcasting rights were sold on a purely national basis with the result that it was impossible to subscribe to TV services from another Member State, and therefore urged that a single internal market be implemented for digital TV. ?

Digital television: use of standards for the transmission of signals

The European Parliament adopted the resolution drafted by Astrid THORS (ELDR, Finland) on the Commission's communication on digital television in the European Union. Parliament urged as a fundamental principle open access for digital TV, similar to the open network provision in the telecom sector ensuring that decoders for digital TV are in future regarded as part of the information infrastructure. Parliament also considered that interoperability can be achieved through different approaches to standards, either making them open and mandatory or installing a system where the proprietary standards are subject to licensing; whilst the present Directive opted for two different techniques, the simulcrypt technique and common interfaces, in the future, it is advisable under certain conditions that national authorities are mandated to impose the application of open standards adopted by European standardisation authorities.?