



**International Chamber of Commerce**

*The world business organization*

## **Policy statement**

### **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**

Commission on Telecommunications and Information Technologies, 6 June 2001

#### **French version**

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) recognizes the central role ITU has played for more than a century in developing network standards and safeguarding the radio spectrum from frequency interference. We fully support a continuing role for the ITU in these areas in coming years.

ICC recognizes that the rapid evolution in communications and information technologies now underway is fundamentally changing the nature of the marketplace in which services are provided to individual consumers and businesses. The era of state-owned monopoly telephone operators is giving way to an open and competitive marketplace where evolving services, new competitors and new opportunities abound.

ICC notes that technological "convergence" provides an opportunity to remove regulation where it was once thought necessary in non-competitive markets where such markets become truly competitive. Technological "convergence" is serving as a pretext by some to attempt to impose monopoly-era regulations on new or evolving activities that are provided in a competitive marketplace. Pro-competitive regulation of the basic telecommunications market as set forth in the WTO Reference Paper continues to be vital, where true competition does not exist. The ITU should resist any suggestion that convergence implies the need for more, rather than less, control of marketplace activities provided in a competitive environment.

Additionally, ICC enthusiastically supports the ongoing efforts to reform the ITU to bring its mission and management in line with the realities of a competitive marketplace shaped by rapidly changing technologies. On this point, we are pleased to note the important and influential role played by the Secretary General of ICC, Maria Livanos Cattai, in the ITU reform process. We urge ITU to continue its reform process and to consult with the private sector as part of that process.

This brings us to our specific concern at this juncture. Recent developments suggest that the ITU, in seeking to define a new role for itself in the midst of the changing nature of the communications marketplace, may hamper, rather than promote, innovation in networks and services and the growth of competitive markets. ICC strongly believes that the Internet should, from this perspective, remain unregulated. We therefore oppose any efforts by the ITU, by design or by default, to assume the role of global Internet regulator. The Internet and electronic commerce are flourishing in a competitive marketplace, which ICC believes should be governed by market forces and self-regulation.

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