



**Comité européen de liaison
sur les Services d'intérêt général**
**European Liaison Committee
on Services of General Interest**
**Europäisches Verbindungskomitee
"Dienstleistungen von allgemeinem Interesse"**

Secrétariat / Secretariat / Sekretariat : RESEAUX SERVICES PUBLICS

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Mr Jose Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission.

Dear Mr. President,

Services of general interest are recognized by all Community authorities as being a key element of the European civilisation model and of its social model. A number of Treaties assign them a very special place in the social and territorial cohesion of the Union (article 16 of the TCE). The right of access to these services is recognised by article 36 of the Charter of fundamental rights of the European Union. The White Paper on services of general interest specifies that in the event of a conflict between general interest and competition, it is the general interest which must prevail. You, personally, recalled this principle before the European Parliament, in September 2006.

However, in spite of twenty years of long and difficult debates and of many directives or texts, whether sectoral or concerning the financing of services of general economic interest, many uncertainties still remain as regards the definition, organisation, regulation, financing and evaluation of these services, in the context of the construction of the internal market. It is under such conditions that, the Court of Justice of the European Communities is brought to rule on many conflicts which could be avoided if the Union had a clear legislation on these subjects. The sectoral approach, though essential, cannot address all concerns and doubts of citizens as well as those of operators and public authorities.

In addition, the liberalisation of network sectors has led to the constitution of European oligopolies, whereas financing and regulation remain at the level of Member States. This leads to difficulties in going beyond national organisations and setting up a true European internal market, thus enabling the implementation of both the Strategy of Lisbon and a sustainable development.

As a complement to and in association with sectoral procedures (energy, transport, telecommunications, posts, social services of general interest, health services), it is necessary that within the Commission, over which you preside, means for a cross cutting approach be set up. To this end we suggest the nomination of a Commissioner in charge of this mission and, that appropriate services should be made available for an effective implementation of the task.

This solution, we strongly believe, is the only one effective enough to overcome the difficulties of cross cutting approach in SGI and SGEI in the Union and to propose necessary legislative and regulation provisions. It is the only way forward to breaking out of the circle which seems to have been firmly established, starting from communications to Commission's White Paper through opinions of the Parliament, since the first communication of the Commission in 1996.

We remain at disposal to further examine and develop this proposal

Yours faithfully

For the Secretariat of the CELSIG
Jean-Claude Boual