



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

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**First contribution**

**Services of general interest as an element of the guarantee of  
fundamental rights, solidarity, sustainable development and  
active democracy**

For half a century now, the European integration has made possible the creation of an area of peace and of development and has enabled the European peoples to have the possibility to master their destiny and carry weight on globalisation. At the moment of crossing a new stage, the Convention must define an ambitious perspective so as to promote our shared values: democracy, the respect of fundamental rights, lawful State, solidarities as well as our social model.

The European Union should make its goals concrete –social and economic progress, high level of employment, balanced and sustainable development, reinforcement of economic, social and territorial cohesion- which can only be achieved with the involvement of European citizens, associating participatory and representative democracy.

Featuring among the key elements of the European civilisation, are services of general interest (SGI). Whatever their level and form of application they constitute an essential factor for the guarantee of fundamental rights of the individual (cf. article 36 of the Charter of fundamental rights), they strengthen the economic, social and territorial cohesion (cf. article 16 of the Treaty), they create conditions for a sustainable development.

They concern objectives and missions just as well as means of the Union and, they fall under all institutions within Europe: European Union, Member States, regions and local communities.

Public communities therefore have, a special role of concerned, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, since, the market alone cannot meet all social, economic and cultural demands. To achieve this, there is need for clear common rules at the European constitutional level, in order that each institutional and territorial level be able to fulfil its missions and responsibilities. This is necessary so as to assure all diversities that exist within the Union, of the possibility of expressing themselves both on objectives to be defined as well as on means to accomplish them.

The SGI have a crucial role to play in the Union's economic, social and territorial cohesion at the time when it is going to welcome new members. Whence, new forms of solidarities will show up through European SGI and through SGI in the extended European territory. It will thus be possible to develop the European feeling of belonging and citizenship. Further, the European Union would be able to fulfil its role, influence globalisation and create positive co-operation links with countries in the South as well as those in the North, leading towards a controlled regulation of human activities in particular commercial and financial exchanges.

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