



**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

66 rue de Rome
F - 75008 PARIS
FRANCE
Tel (33-1) 43 71 20 28
E-mail : celsig@celsig.org

Avenue Boileau, 16
B - 1040 BRUXELLES
BELGIQUE
(32-2) 739 15 32
fax (32-2) 739 15 39

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**European Commission
Consultation on the Green Paper on services of general interest
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The Green Paper on services of general interest (SGI) comes at a crucial moment in the European construction. On the one side, the Convention submitted its draft Constitution mid-July and the Intergovernmental Conference will start its discussions this October and, on the other hand the Union will be enlarged with ten new members in May 2004, others will follow soon. Further, it is appropriate to also recall that the GP is the outcome of a struggle and a number of demands from the civil society, over so many years, in particular from the CELSIG. Lastly, the endorsement of a positive legislation on services of general interest is both necessary and urgent and the Green paper should not be used as a pretext to delay it.

Two important questions emerge: what kind of social justice and what kind of society do we want to have in the next fifty years? How can we promote them to the European level and what global role do we want to play.

SGI provide means to guarantee the effectiveness of fundamental rights and are a founder component of the European social model. This is true for all SGI, commercial or not and particularly for those based on solidarity. This subject is only weakly tackled in the Green paper, whereas some European policies tend to question solidarities in the Union.

The European policy cannot be construed from the "nest" of other policies. The Union should have a genuine doctrine, for the totality of its territory, without hesitating to go very deep in its analysis and consider, for example, the question of the definition of European services of general interest and, transform its doctrine into a positive legislation.

CELSIG persisted in answering the 30 questions asked by the Green Paper even if many of these questions were badly formulated. Some are not sufficiently clear others not at all. For example in questions concerning oligopolies, corruption in all its forms, enlargement, sustainable development. There is also lack of taking into account the draft Constitution. Further, analysis conducted from the Green Paper should make it possible to go beyond the stage whereby the European Union is considered in terms of juxtapositions: juxtaposition of Member States, markets, histories, traditions, etc. What counts now, is the construction of the European society for all its present and future European citizens.

The Green paper on SGI should provide the occasion to carry on with discussions started in the framework of the Convention. To us it is inconceivable that it ends in a status quo or in regression, legally and politically. The debate which has been launched should make it possible to advance ideas and conceptions on: the general interest, the economic and social cohesion, the territorial cohesion, the role of government authorities, the role of the citizen, the guarantee of fundamental rights, various solidarities, the relationship between services of general interest and sustainable development, the development of European services of general interest, the adaptation to evolutions, etc.

Work launched by the Green Paper should lead on to a framework directive to whose preparation we would like to take part. On its part CELSIG will prepare a model of draft directive.

The CELSIG secretariat
P. Bauby, J-C Boual and K. Varin