



PES GROUP project:
"Draft for a European framework directive for Services of General Economic Interest"
Follow-up of 7 February 2006 Seminar
Information about completion and launch of document

The PES Group expert group on the future of services of general interest (SGI) and services of general economic interest (SGEI), established by the PES Group Bureau decision of 6 July 2005, completed its mandate by presenting a preliminary draft for a European framework directive for SGI at a PES Group seminar, with more than 200 participants on 7 February 2006. The expert group met between October 2005 and January 2006, under the guidance of a contact group of interested PES Group members.¹

A first version of the draft proposal and an explanatory statement were presented to a PES Group seminar on 7 February 2006, for an exchange of views on a number of political and technical options. A deadline of February 24th was set for comments. A joint meeting of Horizontal Working Groups C+D on March 7 provided guidance on which options should be included in the final proposal.

It is proposed that the text, together with an explanatory memorandum, should then be finalised by a member of the expert group², under the guidance of the Members' contact group. The PES Group will present the draft legislative proposal end of April/beginning of May 2006 as the work of a group of independent experts, with which the Group is proud to be associated, and which we brought together in order to put an end to years of delay and uncertainty.

Producing this European framework directive is a high PES Group priority, given new momentum by the vote on the Services directive which excluded SGI fully and SGEI partially. The timing is favourable: the EU Austrian Presidency intends to proceed on this matter, while leading European organisations, such as ETUC and EPSU, have renewed their support following the vote on the Services directive. The purpose of the Group initiative is to build on the political momentum for a European framework directive. By producing a detailed draft Directive, the Group will challenge the Commission's failure to act - and its argument that the issue is too complex to be tackled in a framework directive.

PES Group Secretariat
8 March 2006

¹ Members of the contact group, invited to all meetings, included Désir, Goebbels, Swoboda, van den Burg, Gebhardt, Hughes, Rapkay, Bersani, Herczog, Savary, de Rossa, de Vits, Rasmussen.

² Professor Stéphane Rodrigues, advocate in Brussels and professor in Paris I Sorbonne University, author of the book on "The new regulation of the public services in Europe" (2000) as well as of a study on "Services of General Interest in Europe" (for the Committee of the Regions, 2005).

Timetable for finalisation and launch of Draft Framework Directive for Services of General Economic Interest

- **March - week 10:** Horizontal Working Group C+D, 7 March 2006, exchange of views to resolve outstanding political choices regarding finalisation of draft text;
- **March/April - weeks 10-14:** Further drafting work, with input from external experts, to finalise the legislative draft text and explanatory notes;
- **March - week 12 and April - week 14:** present and discuss the legislative draft text in the PES Group plenary. (If necessary, extraordinary Horizontal Working Group C+D to solve outstanding problems);
- **April - week 14-15:** finalise text and translations (4 working languages).