

Recommendations

- Eurofedop asks the European Commission to establish clear rules in the directive by which high quality services of general interest can be guaranteed in all affiliated countries.
- Eurofedop asks the European Commission to establish frameworks in the directive by which an effective control on the realisation of high quality services of general interest can be organised.
- No directive without the actual realisation of administrative cooperation between the 25 countries. This is one of the necessary conditions for effective control.
- Eurofedop insists that the directive would clearly establish the conditions under which compensation in the form of state aid to public services is possible.
- Eurofedop suggests to regularly evaluate the functioning of the directive and discuss the results of

*this with the social partners.

- According to Eurofedop, “taking account of” the results of the large consultation means that account will be taken of these results with the publication of further European legislation.
- Eurofedop is aware that the organisation of a well-balanced internal market and the free circulation of services is necessary.
- Eurofedop asks the European Commission to operate calmly towards this goal and, by doing so, take account of the situation as it is in the affiliated countries.
- Eurofedop is of the opinion that a clear description has to be given of what the consequences of the directive will be for workers in the affiliated countries and underlines that the directive must not be put into effect before this knowledge has been reached.
- According to Eurofedop, the directive must not be a reason to cut down on the current level of working conditions with a view to reducing as much as possible the labour costs.
- Eurofedop is deeply concerned about the frameworks that have to be established in order to guarantee the delivery of high-quality services. These frameworks have to be included in the directive.
- Eurofedop demands that a clear (nominal) list of services that fall under the directive would be established. All services that are not mentioned in this list would fall out of the scope of the directive.
- European social dialogue must have co-decision over matters that concern workers of the public service so deeply.

Results Theme Conference Trade Council Ministries and Finances

Directive concerning services in the internal market and the debate concerning services of general interest. QUO VADIS ?

Monday 12 and Tuesday 13 September 2005

Jean Monnet Centre

Luxemburg

EU actions that were given special attention by public service trade unions, have been the directive on services in the internal market COM(2004)2, the services of general interest (COM(2003)270) and the White Paper (COM(2004)374). As they are more of relevance today than before, they require an updated position.



The term «services of general interest» cannot be found in the Treaty itself. It is derived in Community practice from the term «services of general economic interest», which is used in the Treaty. It is broader than the term «services of general economic interest» and covers both market and non-market services which the public authorities class as being of general interest and subject to specific public service obligations.

- universal service
- continuity
- quality of service
- affordability

Wilhelm Gloss

He welcomes the initiative of the European Commission to first discuss the issue of services of general interest on a broad basis, before further liberalisation steps will be taken. He supports the position of the Commission as it was expressed in the Green Paper and on the basis of which high-quality services of general interest are an important factor in the creation of a competitive environment and the achievement of greater cohesion in the European Union.

Marcel Haag

In 2005, a communication will be published on social and health services of general interest. The co-operation between member states in the field of health services and medical care will be facilitated, so that a high quality of services may be reached in the whole of the European Union. In 2006, the various directives on postal services, electricity, gas, television and water will be evaluated. Furthermore, the European Commission will revise its evaluation mechanism for services of general interest in 2006.

Joost Vantomme

Network industries are different, the business structure for post is not the same as for telecom, gas, electricity, water or railways.

The concepts of these other sectors are not necessarily applicable to the postal sector.

The member states have the obligation to ensure that “the universal service evolves in response to the technical, economic & social environment and to the needs of users”.

Bert Van Caelenberg

He states that the Whiter Paper has not succeeded in providing a clear conceptual and structured framework for, nor a complete picture of, public services and services of general interest across Europe. Moreover, he draws attention to the important role that is played by local and regional authorities in the provision of services of general interest. He expects the Commission to give special attention to the needs and improvement of services of general interest in the new Member States.

Recommendations

Bolkestein

Eurofedop fears that the actual implementation of the “Bolkestein” proposals would have severe consequences for the regulated services and professions and for the social economy. It fears that great problems might arise with regard to the control and enforcement of rules concerning the work organisation and secondment. And also as regards health services, it is underlined that this directive might undermine the responsibility of services.

Consequently, we demand a European services directive that protects the internal market to the extent that it guarantees fair trade and takes account of the differences that exist with regard to national economies and social structures.

And does not imply that all countries have to adapt to the economic and social structure of the economically weak countries. Such harmonisation is unacceptable from the social policy point of view. Moreover, no account is taken of the various practices that exist in the different member states with regard to services of general interest and the action capacity of public services.

Bartho Pronk

It is a complicated directive that has given rise to a lot of discussion. The presentation by the responsible European Commissioner has been extremely difficult. The great objection against the directive concerns the country of origin. This creates undesirable competition between companies. It is not in line with ILO treaties and realisation is only possible in one social Europe. The European Commission will not withdraw the directive but will wait for the debate in the European Parliament. It is not clear yet what the European Parliament will do.

Joost Vantomme

How can companies that offer public services be protected with regard to the putting into effect of the directive ?

Cecile Helmryd

There is a lot of opposition to the contents of the directive, which is partially based on the lack of clarity in the directive. The European Commission has in the meantime clarified the directive in certain fields. The aim is not to make public services independent or to privatise them. Because of the many exceptions that have been included in the directive, of services that are excluded from the free establishment of companies, the discussion on the rules of the country of origin can be limited.

Adele Cifani

The directive will certainly have an impact on working conditions and the working environment in the various countries. There are great differences between the old and the new countries. The result would be social dumping, and we have to fight this. The notion of worker should be clarified against the notion of seconded worker and freelancer and, especially, the working conditions that apply in these situations should be clarified.

Nicolas Estgen

The directive will possibly also have consequences on services that older civilians depend on, such as health services and social care. An increasing offer of cheaper services from other countries will have consequences on the quality of services that older civilians depend on.

Eric Engelbrecht

As long as there is no harmonisation of regulations in the various member states and a comparable quality level (in accordance with economic capacities) has not been reached, the application of the draft directive in an unmodified form or without transitory provisions, will lead to difficulties on the ground.

