

ORAL QUESTION O-0113/01

pursuant to Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure

by Enrique Barón Crespo, Proinsias De Rossa, Robert Goebbels and Pervenche Berès, on behalf of the PSE Group
to the Council

Subject: Proposal for a Directive for a Framework for Services of General Interest

The European Council invited the Commission to report back on services of general interest to the European Council at Laeken in December 2001.

On 17 October 2001, the Commission adopted its report to the Laeken European Council on Services of General Interest (COM(2001)0598) which complements its previous Communications on this matter, and also takes into account additional comments on its Communication of September 2000 (COM(2000)0580/final) received by Member States and interested parties. While recognising that 'A framework instrument could highlight the importance the European Union attaches to services of general interest and could help to clarify some of the relevant Community law concepts, in full respect of the principle of subsidiarity', the Commission concludes that it will examine the suggestion to consolidate and specify the principles on services of general interest in a framework directive.

On 13 November 2001, the European Parliament adopted by an overwhelming majority (483 votes in favour, 77 votes against) its opinion¹ on the Commission's Communication of September 2000 calling 'on the Laeken European Council to support vis-à-vis the Commission its proposal for a framework directive on the objectives and organisational arrangements of services of general interest based on Article 95 of the Treaty; this directive should create a legal framework which guarantees the availability of services of general interest to the public, particularly pursuant to Article 16 of the EC Treaty'.

Can the Council inform us how it intends to take into account the European Parliament opinion and what concrete action it intends to take on this particular issue in Laeken?

Tabled: 15.11.2001

Forwarded: 16.11.2001

Deadline for reply: 07.12.2001

¹ Texts adopted on 13.11.2001, item 12