Television broadcasting activities. 'Television without frontiers'

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This report is the sixth annual report from the Commission on the application of Directive 89/552/EEC “Television without frontiers” between 2005 and 2006.

The main objective of the report is to describe and analyse the salient facts relating to the application of the Directive during the reference period. Given that the Commission has adopted a proposal for the modernisation of the Directive, this report also refers to recent developments concerning this legislative proposal.

In recent years, the television market has faced important technological and economic challenges. The broadcasting sector has improved its overall economic performance in terms of turnover (the total net revenues of radio/TV companies in 2004 stood at around EUR 72.8 billion – an increase of 7.9% compared to 2003). However, this trend has not prevented a concentration of operators in specific areas, such as Pay-TV, where business conditions have in many cases not allowed the simultaneous presence of several operators on individual national markets. The development of digital television broadcasting and IPTV has introduced a further element of change to the broadcasting industry.

The report finds that the Directive continues to function effectively as a means of ensuring the freedom to provide television services in the EU. The Commission, acting as guardian to the Treaty, continues to verify the effective implementation of the Directive and takes action where necessary to ensure it. The seventh report on the applications of Article 4 and 5 of the Directive indicate general satisfaction of the results in terms of channels meeting the requirements for European works.

At the same time, the technological and market developments have opened the way to the development of new audiovisual services such as on-demand services. This confirms the need to modernise the EU legal framework. This will be done once the amending Directive on audiovisual media services has been finally adopted.