Services of general interest in Europe

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The Commission has presented its communication on the status of work on the examination of a proposal for a Framework Directive on Services of General Interest. As a follow-up to its commitment submitted to the Laeken European Council, the Commission has decided to produce a Green Paper on services of general interest. The Green Paper will allow the Commission to examine the question of a proposal for a framework directive but also to look more thoroughly at the issue of the role of the European Union in ensuring the provision of high-quality services of general interest to consumers and businesses in Europe. The feasibility and possible added-value of a framework directive will be a core subject for the Green Paper. As already suggested by the Commission in its Report to the Laeken European Council, this issue raises complex questions regarding, among other aspects, the possible objectives, the scope of application and the content of such a directive and its links with existing sector-specific legislation. These questions will require further reflection and discussion which is what the Green Paper is designated to stimulate. Following a public consultation on the basis of this Green Paper, the Commission will finalise its examination and present its conclusions together with concrete initiatives and legislative proposals, if appropriate, by the summer 2003.