[GB] Regulator Publishes Response to European Commission's 1999 Communications Review

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The Independent Television Commission (ITC), which regulates private broadcasting in the UK, has published its response to the European Commission's paper "Towards a new framework for Electronic Communications infrastructure and associated services, the 1999 Communications Review" (COM (1999) 539). It stresses the need to give specific consideration to the needs of the television broadcasting industry rather than focusing on the telecommunications sector. In the UK this latter sector is not regulated by the ITC but by the Office of Telecommunications, although this division of responsibilities is under review. The ITC supports the main regulatory principles set out in the Review, but has a number of reservations. The key points made were as follows:

The ITC accepts the need for reforms to the existing regulation of communications services to enable regulation to become more coherent and more responsive to market developments.

It urges special consideration for the regulatory and commercial needs of the television broadcasting industry and users of broadcasting services rather than focussing primarily on telecommunications.

The ITC is concerned that a homogeneous regulatory environment that does not adequately reflect key sector-specific considerations will not operate in the best interests of all users of telecommunications and broadcasting services.

It contends that the issue of content cannot be separated from other aspects of broadcasting regulation. Content is a fundamental element of consumer expectations and of the broadcasting industry itself.

Content considerations cannot be adequately addressed if they are dissociated from the broader environment of economic and technical considerations as the Review envisages.

Towards a new framework for Electronic Communications infrastructure and associated services; The 1999 Communications Review; The Independent Television Commission Response.

http://www.itc.org.uk/documents/upl_196.doc

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