European Commission: From TV Directive to Content Directive?

IRIS 2001-6:1/3

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A year ago, as required by Article 26 of the Directive itself, the Commission began preparing for a review of the "Television Without Frontiers" Directive 89/552/EEC as amended by Directive 97/36/EC, by publishing a call for tender for various studies relating to different parts of the text. Reports on the quota system (Art. 4-6, see infra) and on the impact of TV advertising and teleshopping on minors were also commissioned.

According to the Education and Culture Commissioner, the review of the Directive will focus particularly on a liberalisation of the provisions on advertising, sponsorship and teleshopping. However, consideration will also be given to what impact certain new types of advertising, such as virtual or split-screen advertising, might have on advertising regulations. In addition, the practical effectiveness of the Directive's provisions on quotas for European works and independent productions is also being investigated and alternative or additional measures to promote audiovisual production are being evaluated.

Following the review and development of the regulatory framework for communications networks and services, access, authorisation and the Universal Service, instigated through the Communications Review 1999, a set of regulations is currently being prepared for adoption next year. These rules will form a significant contribution to the separate regulation within the Community of transmission networks on the one hand and the content of electronic communications on the other. Consideration is also now being given to how provisions governing content, bearing in mind the specific characteristics of broadcasting services, can be applied to the electronic media in general. Increasing attention is also being paid to self- and co-regulation, which were discussed in detail during the German Presidency of the Council in 1999.

In view of the results of the study on TV advertising and minors, the Commission believes that tightening up existing regulations, particularly a total ban on advertising aimed at children, is out of the question.

Call for tender for various studies relating to different parts of the "Television Without Frontiers" Directive 89/552/EEC as amended by Directive 97/36/EC

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