# European Commission: Statement on Services Directive

**IRIS 2005-4:1/2**

*Wouter Gekiere*
*European Parliament*

In his statement to the European Parliament of 8 March 2005, European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services Charles Mc Greevy, confirmed that it is not the intention of the Commission to withdraw its proposal for a Directive on Services in the Internal Market. Launched in early 2004, the proposal sets out a general legal framework to reduce barriers to cross-border provision of services within the European Union. Given the broad scope of the proposal, its content has direct repercussions on the provision of audiovisual services.

The proposal indeed covers all activities involving services except services provided by the state for no remuneration in fulfillment of its social, cultural, educational and legal obligations. Some specific services, such as electronic communications services, are excluded from the proposal on the basis of the argument that they are already governed by specific Community legislation. In his recent statement, Commissioner Mc Greevy has now indicated that specific sensitive sectors, such as health and publicly funded services of general interest should also be excluded from the Directive. As to audiovisual services, several voices within the European Parliament have pointed out the specificity of the audiovisual sector and stressed the need to deal with the uncertainty about the relation between the proposal and existing sectoral directives, such as the Television Without Frontiers Directive.

The core of the Commission's proposal relates to the two services-related fundamental freedoms protected by the EC Treaty. On the one hand, it introduces measures to eliminate restrictions to the freedom of establishment, such as the establishment of single points of contact and the application of a major screening operation to national authorisation schemes. On the other hand, it stimulates the free movement of services by applying the country of origin principle. This means that a service provider established in one Member State who provides services on a temporary basis in another Member State, is only subject to the law of the country in which he/she is established. In his statement, Commissioner Mc Greevy stressed the importance of reducing bureaucracy to stimulate cross-border service provision. At the same time, he admitted that concerns about the operation of the country of origin principle should be addressed and he reassured that the proposal does not intend to endanger workers' rights neither to create social dumping.

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

In accordance with the co-decision procedure, it is now up to the European Parliament to give its opinion on the proposal in first reading. Parliament is expected to pass amendments in plenary session at the earliest by the middle of this year. Commissioner Mc Greevy committed his loyalty to this procedure.

***"Statement to the European Parliament on Services Directive", Speech 05/149 of 8 March 2005***

http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/149&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en

***Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on Services in the Internal Market, COM(2004) 2 final/3***

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52004PC0002R%2802%29:EN:HTML

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026