# [GB] The BBC and the future of broadcasting

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The Committee of National Heritage of the House of Commons, chaired by Gerald Kaufman, has recently published its report on the BBC and the Future of Broadcasting, Since its previous report on the BBC, three years ago, changes in electronic communication have taken and are taking place. In the light of these transformations the Committee examined the prospects of the BBC, surveyed both what the broadcasters are doing and how the framework of regulation is changing to accommodate. One of the recommendations of the report is dealing with the Board of Governors, the watchdogs of the BBC's integrity and trustees for the public. The report stated that "the BBC cannot survive if it is in the hands of a group of people nominated for various attributes not connected with broadcasting. We feel that the time has come for the BBC to be run by a single board comprising the executive chairman, nominated by the Secretary of State for National Heritage, the top management team, and a number of qualified non executive directors from different backgrounds. Overall regulation, particularly in terms of quality, taste, diversity and social responsibility, must be undertaken by an independent authority with the power of sanction, as in the case of Channel 4 ( par. 52)". The report also repeated that the transfer payments which Channel 4 makes to ITV should be brought to an end as soon as possible (par. 57) and that listed events should not be shown exclusively on either pay-per-view or subscription services. (par. 65). The Committee was not persuaded that now is the time to change to a single (communications) regulator (par. 74), which would integrate the tasks of the ITC and Oftel. The report however recommends that the Government should announce that the restrictions on broadcasting by national telecommunications operators, introduced in 1984, will be lifted completely in 2002 (par. 88).

***House of Commons, National Heritage Committee, The BBC and the Future of Broadcasting (Fourth Report, Session 1996-97).***

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