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The future of Social Services of General Interest

Social services of general interest, in their vast diversity of missions, organisation, status, financing,... carry out a large and complex range of activities aimed at meeting essential and growing needs in our societies, potentially for all citizens, but also, in many cases, for more vulnerable people.

The communication of the commission on Social services of general interest of 26 April 2006 has recognised some particularities of those services. It was an important step towards clarification of the nature of those services in relation to the applicable European rules.

There is however a need for more concrete and profound knowledge, exchanges and analyses on how these services are organised (we notice a growing number and diversity of actors), and on the way and conditions in which they operate in our countries, bearing in mind the mission of general interest they fulfil and their contribution to social cohesion. These exchanges will, through a better comprehension of these services in the European context, help us to address the question of a balance between the internal market and the competition rules on the one hand and the provisions that recognise the vital social stakes in which these services fully operate on the other hand.

The peer review will focus on non curative long term care services for the elderly to enable us to have in-depth exchanges.