

**BACKGROUND BRIEFING**  
**PROTECTING EUROPE'S VIEWERS**  
**EURALVA'S RESPONSE TO**  
**THE PROPOSALS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO AMEND**  
**THE TELEVISION WITHOUT FRONTIERS DIRECTIVE**

Later this year, the television viewers - and countless others watching online – may well be ushered into a world of commercial exploitation and information deprivation.

The impending challenge to media regulators comes from the European Commission's proposals to roll back the protections of the Television Without Frontiers Directive.

This week, at a meeting in Lisbon, EURALVA, which represents the interests of many thousands of listeners and viewers across the EU, called for the existing protections to be retained. The Alliance highlighted five areas of concern.

1. The absence of clear rules to identify where a European television service has been licensed and the responsible media regulator.
2. The lack of clear standards when a foreign regulator wishes – as is now becoming fashionable – do devolve regulation to a commercial stakeholder.
3. The removal of the requirement to separate commercial promotion from programmes by specifically allowing, for the first time, product placement in television programmes.
4. The inadequacy of the proposed new Directive to guarantee for all viewers access to short reports on events of public interest regardless of which organisation produced the original coverage.

5. The failure to establish clear rules by which a citizen, who is impugned or unfairly treated in a foreign broadcast, can exercise a right of reply or similar remedy.

To deal with these five areas of concern, EURALVA is calling for:

1. A new recital in the Preamble to the Directive which specifically requires the co-ordination by national regulators of the protections afforded to television viewers and users of audiovisual services.
2. In addition to minor textual amendments to the proposed new Directive, enhanced powers for the Contact Committee, consisting of National Regulators from the 25 Member States and the EU Commission, to co-ordinate the necessary protections

EURALVA members will be pursuing these issues via the European Parliament, the European Commission and – through their national governments and regulatory bodies – the EU Council of Ministers.