

BELGIUM - MEASURES AFFECTING COMMERCIAL  
TELEPHONE DIRECTORY SERVICES

Request for Consultations by the United States

The following communication, dated 2 May 1997, from the Permanent Mission of the United States to the Permanent Mission of Belgium, is circulated in accordance with Article 4.4 of the DSU.

My authorities have instructed me to request consultations with the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium pursuant to Article 4 of the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes (DSU) and Article XXIII of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) regarding certain measures of the Kingdom of Belgium governing the provision of commercial telephone directory services.

The measures concerned include the Royal Decree of July 15, 1994, implementing Article 113 of the Law of March 21, 1991, as amended, on the reform of certain public economic enterprises; measures of the Kingdom of Belgium implementing this decree, including measures that impose conditions for obtaining a license to publish commercial directories in Belgium; and measures governing the acts, policies, and practices of BELGACOM N.V. with respect to telephone directory services.

These measures appear to contravene the provisions of GATS Articles II, VI, VIII, XVII, among others, and to nullify or impair benefits that the United States could reasonably have expected to accrue to it under the specific GATS commitments made by the European Community on behalf of the Kingdom of Belgium.

We look forward to receiving your reply to this request and to fixing a mutually convenient date for consultations.