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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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INTERNATIONAL BUREAU LAUNCHES NEW WORKING PAPER SERIES
Releases First Paper: "Traits of an Independent Communications Regulator: A Search for Indicators"
By Irene Wu

The FCC International Bureau announces a new Working Paper Series providing staff research and analysis on international telecommunications policy.

The first paper is "Traits of an Independent Communications Regulator: A Search for Indicators," by Irene Wu, Assistant Chief, Regional and Industry Analysis Branch, Strategic Analysis and Negotiations Division. This paper argues that a regulatory agency's level of independence can be determined by examining its relationships to three groups (1) other government agencies, (2) the industry it regulates, and (3) the consumers it services.

The paper responds to a growing international interest in how to organize independent regulatory agencies for communications markets. While in the past government departments or ministries were often responsible for regulation, since 1990 the number of independent regulatory authorities has grown from 13 to 119. Furthermore, many states have committed to establishing *independent regulators* as part of their commitments under the World Trade Organization's Basic Telecommunications Agreement.

Using two sets of data, an 18-country survey of regulatory organizations and an in-depth four-country survey of ethics rules and decision-making processes, the paper identifies a number of potential indicators of regulatory independence. Good indicators of the regulator's independence from other government organizations include an agency leader with a guaranteed term of office, who cannot be dismissed for unpopular decisions; funding which is independent of political review; and a scope of authority that is distinct from the government policy-making agency. Measures of independence from the industry include whether the incumbent operators are privately owned and whether there is frequent exchange of staff between the regulator and the regulated industry. Indicators of the regulator's responsiveness to consumer interests include whether there are offices dedicated to consumer affairs and to universal service issues.

The International Bureau Working Paper Series are intended to stimulate discussion and critical comment within the FCC, as well as outside the agency, on issues in international communications policy. Titles may include preliminary work and progress reports, as well as

completed research. The analyses and conclusions in the Working Paper Series are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of other members of the International Bureau, other Commission staff, or the Commission itself. This document will be available on the FCC's World Wide Web site at <http://www.fcc.gov/ib/>.