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## **PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING: New Challenges, New Solutions**

### **Recommendations**

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Constitutional democratic societies depend on communication and more specifically on mass media. Mass media create or reflect the public agenda and take care of its distribution among the citizens. They contribute to identity, common understanding, and the necessary information for citizens in a democracy. They also shape world views and values.

A modern society must therefore guarantee that respective content is accessible by all citizens free and uncompromised by any political, commercial or other individual interest.

While a commercial market in bigger countries may, to a certain extent, take care of this automatically, in smaller and economically volatile countries it is necessary to establish a broadcasting system providing programme and structural guarantees which cover independent information and the representation of all societal groups, as well as offer an integration platform for all. Such a system is capable of shaping the national identity, participation through culture and education, and finally innovation in broadcasting as a cultural value. These functions cannot be all guaranteed by a commercial system, they are typically covered by public service broadcasting systems.

Additionally, in some countries, the public service broadcaster may be the only major nation media organization left.

They must be capable of maintaining the high level of original programme production in order to fulfill the obligations and set a standard of high quality programming for the broadcasting industry as a whole. While maintaining the clear distinctiveness from commercial broadcasters, they must be able to attract a wide audience. It is also their role to spearhead technological innovation in order to use new technologies and all suitable delivery platforms to reach the audience.

Parliaments and governments in EU candidate countries should adopt or improve existing legal and institutional frameworks for public service broadcasting to make pursuit of these goals possible. These frameworks should safeguard the independence and public accountability of public service broadcasting organisations, *inter alia*, by separating it from the civil service

and removing any unwarranted interference by public authorities in their operation, and provide for the adequate and secure financing. Legal provisions should define the public service broadcasting remit in a clear, detailed and verifiable way, setting them clearly apart from commercial broadcasting but, at the same time, making room for attractive mass-appeal programming in their schedules. This programme offer should serve all groups of society, including those neglected by commercial broadcasters, such as ethnic minorities and others. States should encourage and promote self-regulatory schemes in the area of programme standards and journalistic ethics. They should also safeguard the existence of audiovisual archives within public service broadcasting organisations as repositories of the nation's audiovisual heritage to be used by public service broadcasters for the general benefit.

Financing systems for public service broadcasting should provide for diversified sources of revenue (including licence fees, advertising, government services and own revenue) as well as for the financial transparency of public service broadcasters, including separate accounts for programming and non-public-service activities, should they exist. If advertising is allowed it should be treated only as a supplementary source of revenue. Where government subsidies are provided, they should be granted on a secure, long-term basis, without infringing on the independence of public service broadcasters. Special financial or assistance schemes should be put in place in order to enable public service broadcasters to adopt digital technology and develop new channels for digital terrestrial broadcasting.

The financial security and economic independence of public service broadcasters are necessary for their proper operation and credibility in the society. It is the duty of national parliaments and governments to ensure stable and adequate financing for them. It is also their duty to promote the development of a political and civic culture which guarantees the proper environment for public service broadcasting as an emanation of civil society.

The European Union, which made democratic institutions a condition of accession, should – while respecting the principle of subsidiarity – specify more clearly what this means in relation to public service broadcasting. The European Union should treat public service broadcasting as more than just a difficult case of applying state aid rules or competition law. It should make safeguarding of public service broadcasting a crucial goal of its audiovisual policy. The principle goals of this policy should be enshrined in the new Constitutional Treaty, which secure a proper place for media pluralism and media services in the general interest in the European Community.

The assembled participants in the conference call on national parliaments and governments, on the EU, OSCE, and the Council of Europe to adopt these goals as fundamental principles of their media policies and strive actively for their implementation. This should include international cooperation between public service broadcasters in programming exchange, co-production and training. The assembled participants also call on the EBU to continue its active involvement in this effort.