[LV] Parliament adopts public media identity and newsroom provisions

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Sergei Bondarev
Independent expert

On 22 October 2026, Latvian parliament, the *Saeima*, adopted amendments to the Law on public electronic mass media and their governance, requiring the preservation of the historical identities of *Latvijas Radio* and *Latvijas Televīzija*, and the separate operation of their news services. Bill 1434/Lp14 passed its second and final reading under the urgent procedure by 76 votes to four, with eight abstentions. The provisions concern the single public broadcaster that was formed when the two organisations merged on 1 January 2025 (*Latvijas Sabiedriskais medijs* – LSM).

The institutional distinction is significant. The measure does not reverse the merger by re-establishing *Latvijas Radio* and *Latvijas Televīzija* as separate broadcasters. Rather, it places branding and certain editorial and organisational responsibilities on the merged public broadcaster, including with regard to its online services. Historical continuity and corporate separation are therefore not treated as the same legislative question.

Under the new provisions, the state must protect the historical identity and recognisability of public electronic media. LSM must retain and use the historical names *Latvijas Radio* and *Latvijas Televīzija*, as well as their abbreviations, logos, stylised forms and trademarks. This duty applies to editorial activities, including programme production and the provision of linear and non-linear services in analogue and digital environments, as well as public communication. Exceptions may be made for newly created programmes or services.

The amendments follow an earlier proposal to introduce a general statutory definition of a nationally significant historical public-media identity. However, following a recommendation, this proposal was rejected in favour of a more specific obligation concerning the two named broadcasters. A proposed transition relating to broader historical public-institution identities was also rejected.

The parliament also approved an amendment to the law's operating principles, specifying that, in fulfilling their public-service remit objectives and ensuring diversity of opinion, the *Latvijas Radio* and *Latvijas Televīzija* news services should operate as separate, editorially autonomous organisational units. The Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee had rejected this proposal, tabled by MP Ieva

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Brante, but the plenary adopted it by 53 votes to 13, with 17 abstentions. Another proposal, which would also have expressly required separate editorial resources and management for news and analytical programmes, was rejected. Those additional requirements therefore do not form part of the adopted provisions.

The sequence of parliamentary votes is crucial. The committee had opposed the clause requiring separate news services, but MPs approved this proposal in a separate vote before passing the bill as a whole. It would therefore be incorrect to treat the committee's negative recommendation as the final legislative decision. Conversely, the rejection of the more prescriptive amendment means that separate editorial budgets and departmental heads were not expressly required.

The latest amendments follow an earlier agreement on retaining the broadcasters' historical brand names. On 14 July 2026, LSM board representatives informed the parliamentary committee that an agreement had been reached. The committee therefore called for work on binding legislation to continue. The October amendments place identity obligations in law alongside a requirement governing the organisation of the two news services. They provide for entry into force the day after promulgation.

The exception for newly created programmes or services describes how the historical names and marks must be used, but does not cancel the general public-service obligations in the governance law. While the July agreement on retaining the familiar brands was an institutional agreement, the October vote gives the issue a legislative basis, with the amendments entering into force on promulgation rather than on the day of the vote.

Grozījumi Sabiedrisko elektronisko plašsaziņas līdzekļu un to pārvaldības likumā (1434/Lp14), 2. lasījums, steidzams

https://likumi.lv/ta/id/349532-grozijumi-sabiedrisko-elektronisko-plassazinas-lidzeklu-un-to-parvaldibas-likuma

Amendments to the Law on public electronic mass media and their governance (1434/Lp14), second reading under the urgent procedure

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