[NL] Statement by the Committee on Media Concentrations

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On 19 April, the Committee on Media Concentrations (Commissie Mediaconcentraties) submitted a report to the Secretary of State for Education, Culture and Science (Staatssecretaris van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen), entitled "The benefits of variety. Concentrations in the media sector and the question of specific legislation" (" Profijt van pluriformiteit. Over concentraties in de mediasector en de vraag naar bijzondere regelgeving"). In its report, the Committee concludes that, in spite of a steady increase in media concentrations, so far there is no sign that either the variety of the media or access to it is being jeopardised. The Committee also explains that the current legal framework - especially the Unfair Competition Act - contains adequate legislative provisions to counter any damaging effects that may result from media concentrations. The Committee sets out nine recommendations in its conclusions. The first recommendation points out that the foremost duty of the State should be to offer sufficient freedom for commercial and public broadcasting while guaranteeing fair competition. The Committee also recommends that the State should not make any demands concerning programme content or lay down similar requirements, such as a broadcaster profile, either for commercial broadcasting companies or for other commercial organisations involved in the media. According to the Committee, the Dutch Competition Authority (Nederlandse Mededingings Autoriteit - NMA) is responsible, amongst other things, for monitoring the media sector under the provisions of the Unfair Competition Act. It considers that, in view of the unusual nature of this sector, it is extremely important for the NMA to keep a constant eye on plurality in the media. Concerning the editorial code of conduct (redactiestatuten), the Committee recommends that the State should endeavour to introduce such a code not only for all daily newspapers and opinion-forming magazines, but also, by means of collective agreements (Collectieve Arbeids Overeenkomst - CAO), for other media which influence the diversity of opinion.

This would apply, therefore, to broadcasting and certain Internet services, for example.

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