[DK] Denmark: The Media-Agreement of 28 March 2000

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On 21 March 2000, the Minister for Culture, Ms. Elsebeth Gerner, presented a draft concerning the broadcast of TV Services. In the following days the initiative was intensively discussed in the press as the draft presents controversial points of view. On 28 March 2000, the government parties, the Social Democratic Party and the Radical Party, entered into a political settlement with the Socialist People´s Party and the Centre Democrats to be in force for the period 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2004. The main points of the agreement concern the financing of public service programmes, TV advertising for children, outsourcing of the fourth and the fifth TV channel and access for the entire Danish population to the public TV and radio services.

The following is a brief description of the main points:

In order to offer a strong and varied public service to the population it has been agreed to finance the public service by raising the licence fees by 5% globally until the end of the year 2004.

Opposition has grown against the proposal of the Minister of Culture on prohibiting advertising for children. The prohibition has been limited to five minutes before and after programmes for children. Still, this point of the settlement is considered controversial because of the difficulties of defining the concept of advertising for children. A council for deciding the actual advertising cases shall be established. Measures concerning sponsorship in general and surreptitious advertising shall be considered.

Besides the public service channels on DR (Danmarks Radio) 1, DR 2 and TV 2 a fourth and a fifth channel are available. The Minister of Culture has decided that the fourth channel must broadcast classic music, cultural programmes and similar presentations. Cross-promotion should be possible. The fifth channel shall offer a broad variety of programmes. The only requirement shall be that the channel must broadcast news on the same level as the DR. The Minister of Culture wanted the fourth channel to be managed by the broadcaster TV 2. But it has been agreed to outsource both the fourth and the fifth channel. The common opinion is that DR most likely will win the competition concerning the public offer of the fourth channel. For the fifth channel there should be competition between the associated leading Danish newspapers and foreign commercial broadcasters. It is

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doubtful whether the TV 2 broadcaster can afford to compete forthe management of the fifth channel. DR is not permitted to bid for the fifth channel.

The settlement has supported the intention of the Minister of Culture to make public service broadcasting available for the whole Danish population on all the Danish channels by digital TV and radio. A legislative proposal has not yet been presented.

Draft concerning the broadcast of TV Services.

Media Agreement.

Press articles in Danish describing the new Media-settlement.

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