[BA] Law on the Public Broadcasting System of Bosnia and Herzegovina Still in Draft Form

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In mid-April the Council of Ministers of Bosnia-Herzegovina (BA) again rejected the Draft Law on Public Service Broadcasting (PBS) in BA. If it had been approved, the next and final step would have been the BA-Parliament, the House of Peoples (Upper House) and the House of Representatives (Lower House). The Draft Law was rejected because of certain issues such as the appointment of members of the advisory bodies, and their mandate. The core provisions were not disputed. The Draft Law is composed of 77 articles, 2 parts, and the following 11 sections: General Provisions, Subscription Fee, Programming, Advertising and Sponsorship, Other Obligations, Rights, Assets and Financing, Governance and Management, Termination of PBS in BA, Transitional, and Final Provisions

It regulates the basic elements for the functioning of the PBS in BA, e.g., the relationship among the three public broadcasters envisaged by the system, their registration, as well as their activities and organisation.

The three PBS envisaged for BA are:

- Public Broadcasting Service of BA (PBS BA), the umbrella media body/outlet;

- Radio-television of the Federation of BA (RTV FBA), the public broadcaster of the Federation of BA, and

- Radio-television of Republika Srpska (RT RS), the public broadcaster of RS.

All three public broadcasters should promote culture, education, pluralism, but PBS BA programming should in particular reflect the national, religious, historic, cultural, linguistic and other characteristics of the constituent peoples and citizens of BA. The Draft Law is in line with the so-called Second Decision on Restructuring the Public Broadcasting System in BA of 23 October 2000, made by the Office of the High Representative (OHR), which envisaged a mixed funding system. That system may include viewers' and listeners' subscription fees, appropriations from the general public budget, and revenue from advertising. Assuming the passage of the law, PBS was scheduled to start broadcasting on 7 May 2002.

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