[GB] BBC Narrowly Fails to Meet Independent Production Quota

IRIS 2004-1:1/33

David Goldberg
deeJgee Research/Consultancy

The BBC has a duty to ensure that independent producers produce 25% of “qualifying programmes” (see IRIS 1998-2: 15 and IRIS 1997-1: 15; for the recent changes to the definition of “independent producer” see IRIS 2003-9: 9). This target applies to BBC1 and BBC2 but not to its digital channels.

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) is required to compile an annual report for communication to the Secretary for Culture Media and Sport. The Minister may then decide on any appropriate action.

For the period 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003, 21% of such programmes were produced independently (down from 21.8% and 23.7%, in the previous two years).

However, another requirement - that the programmes be of a satisfactory range and diversity (in terms of hours broadcast and cost of acquisition) - was met satisfactorily.

The OFT's Report (its tenth) will be its last, as the function has been transferred to OFCOM, under the provisions of the Communications Act 2003 (see IRIS 2003-8: 10). OFCOM will have greater enforcement powers in this regard.

Independent Productions transmitted by the BBC, Tenth Report, Office of Fair Trading, October 2003

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