

# Parliamentary Assembly: New Recommendation on Public Service Broadcasting

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*Tarlach McGonagle  
Institute for Information Law (IViR), University of Amsterdam*

On 27 January 2004, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) adopted Recommendation 1641 (2004), entitled "Public service broadcasting". The Recommendation calls on the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to "adopt a new major policy document on public service broadcasting" which would (i) take cognisance of relevant recent developments, and (ii) define "standards and mechanisms of accountability for the future of public service broadcasting". It suggests that this task could be addressed at the forthcoming Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy in Kyiv, Ukraine.

The Recommendation favours concerted action by the various limbs of the Council of Europe in order to "ensure proper and transparent monitoring, assistance and, where necessary, pressure, so that member states undertake the appropriate legislative, political and practical measures in support of public service broadcasting". In addition, the Recommendation calls on the Committee of Ministers to "consider specific measures" aimed at aligning public service broadcasting legislation in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia and Ukraine with "European standards". Close cooperation with other international organisations is also advocated in the interest of upholding freedom of expression standards. The Committee of Ministers is asked to seek to help to achieve recognition (i) for audiovisual services as "more than simply a commodity" in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) negotiations (see IRIS 2003-6: 5), and (ii) for public service broadcasting as a key feature of the Information Society at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) (see IRIS 2004-2: 2, IRIS 2003-6: 2, IRIS 2003-3: 4 and IRIS 2002-2: 3).

Recommendation 1641 also suggests lines of action for the governments of Member States: to reaffirm "their commitment to maintaining a strong and vibrant independent public service broadcasting [ sic ] whilst adapting it to the requirements of the digital age"; to define appropriate frameworks within which public service broadcasting could function, adapt and modernise; to conceive of educational and training programmes for journalists which would be geared towards the digital media.

The Recommendation is based on an extensive, identically-titled report.

*Public service broadcasting, Recommendation no. 1641, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 27 January 2004*

<http://assembly.coe.int/main.asp?Link=/documents/adoptedtext/ta04/erec1641.htm>

