[NL] Proposed Modifications to the Public Broadcasting System

IRIS 2005-4:1/25

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On 7 February 2005 the government proposed a modification of the Mediawet (Dutch Media Act) referred to as Wetsvoorstel strategie en sturing publieke omroep (Legislative proposal on the strategy and control of the public broadcasting system).

Since 2000, the Dutch Media Act provides for an evaluation of the performances of public broadcasting associations by an independent visitation commission. The evaluation is to be held every five years. On 2 April 2004 the first visitation commission, under the chairmanship of Mr. Rinnooy Kan, carried out its evaluation and presented a report on the functioning of public broadcasting associations during the first half of the concession period 2000 - 2005. The commission stated that, looking at each public broadcasting association individually, performance ranges from reasonable to good. Mutual cooperation however is seriously inadequate. As a result the programme-offer and the public reach falls short of target. Broadcasting associations are more focused on internal affairs than on the demands of the viewing and listening public.

According to the commission, the inadequacy of the performances can partly be explained by the complicated structure of the decision-making process within each association. The cabinet accepts this conclusion and considers an alteration of the organisation and control of public broadcasting associations necessary. Therefore it has put forward this legislative proposal. The proposal does not affect the foundations of the current public broadcasting system. It envisages the development of a collective strategy for public broadcasting associations through agreements on performance both mutual and with the government. Also, the role of the board of directors will be strengthened to secure a clear direction of the programming on radio and television channels. Finally, the management of the associations will be reformed. A supervisory board, independent of the executive of the broadcasting associations, will be set up. Broadcasting associations will be able to put forward their views and contribute to shaping policy through a board of broadcasting associations, which will be newly established.

Wetsvoorstel strategie en sturing publieke omroep, Kamerstukken II 2004/05, 29 991, nr. 1-4

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Legislative proposal on the strategy and control of the public broadcasting system, Kamerstukken II 2004/05, 29 991, nr. 1-4

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