[NL] Governmental Agreement on Modifications to the Public Broadcasting System

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On 26 March 2005, the representatives of the three coalition parties of the right-wing / Christian democratic government (D66, CDA and VVD) reached a political agreement which encompasses several topics including a proposal for future media policy.

This so called Paasakkoord (Easter Agreement) is a direct consequence of the Opposition's refusal to endorse one of D66's main political aims- namely, the introduction of an elected mayor- thereby forcing the ruling parties to revise their coalition agreement.

The agreement addresses a number of priorities among which a proposed media policy regarding public service broadcasting. The main aim is to increase public broadcasters' efficiency by encouraging cooperation between public broadcasting associations and decreasing these associations' individual power. The problem might be caused by the complicated structure of the decision-making process within each association (report of an independent commission presented on 2 April 2004). The cabinet has taken over this conclusion and has put forward a legislative proposal (see IRIS 2005-3: 14). This proposal was brought into the negotiations on the Paasakkoord.

The agreement aims to safeguard internal and external diversity in public service broadcasting and to ensure it adapts to the new digital environment. Public broadcasters must be able to operate independently from technological distribution platforms so as to be active on radio, television and the internet (or a combination of these platforms).

Broadcasting priorities have been set and encompass the news, public debate and specific information on education, arts and culture. Furthermore, a Supervisory Board will be introduced to supervise the Board of Directors of the Nederlandse Omroep Stichting (Dutch Broadcasting Foundation, NOS). This Board of Directors will in turn be advised by a Board of Licensees.

This is an agreement in outline, before the legislative procedure is kick-started much can still happen. State Secretary for Media affairs Medy Van der Laan,will work further on the model in the upcoming weeks.

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Paasakkoord

http://www.minaz.nl/data/1111873089.pdf

Easter Agreement

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