[NL] Muslim Organisations Must Share their Allocated Public Broadcasting Time

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Anne-Jel Hoelen
Institute for Information Law (IViR), University of Amsterdam

The Beleidslijn zendtijdaanvragen van kerkgenootschappen en genootschappen op geestelijke grondslag (the Policy on applications for broadcasting time from religious and other spiritual organisations) based on Section 39f of the Mediawet (the Dutch Media Act), according to which the Commissariaat voor de Media (the Dutch Media Authority) may allocate public national broadcasting time to religious and other spiritual organisations once every five years, recognizes Islam as one of the seven main religions and other spiritual organisations (see IRIS 2004-5: 14).

However, it is up to the applicant organisation to prove it best represents one specific religion or spiritual organisation. None of the aspiring Islamic applicants for the allocation period of 2005 - 2010 individually represented the Muslim community in the broadest sense. The Dutch Media Authority rejected the application of SIK (Samenwerkende Islamitische Koepel) because they do not represent all four movements of Islam and decided to consider the separate applications of Stichting Moslims en Overheid (Muslims and Government Foundation - CMO) and the Nederlandse Moslimraad (Duth Muslim Council - NMR). The CMO and the NMR collectively represent the Muslim community as much in number as in broadness (i.e. Sunnis, Shiites...etc...). However, in accordance with the policy of the Media Authority in principle only one organisation is entitled to the allocated broadcasting time. That is why the CMO and the NMR had to set up a foundation to apply for joint broadcasting time. To make this possible and easier, the Media Authority gave instructions as to the content of the regulations involved. In the proposed construction, the organisations would be free in their individual programming but would have to cooperate in using available facilities. On 14 March the Media Authority definitively decided to reserve the Islamic Broadcasting time for the foundation that was to be set up. Although the CMO and the NMR pledged to join forces and set up a foundation at first, they failed to reach a consensus and their conciliation attempts became stranded on 15 April 2005.

It would not be an option to allocate the total amount of Islamic broadcasting time to either the CMO or the NMR because only together do they represent the Muslim community in its diversity. That is why the allocated public broadcasting time will need to be divided between these two organisations. This will possibly also have consequences for the financial position of the newly-formed Nederlandse Moslimomroep (Dutch Muslim Broadcasting Organisation - NMO).

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"CMO en NMR moeten Islamzendtijd delen", 19.04.2005

http://www.cvdm.nl/pages/actueel.asp?m=p&ID=1403

The CMO and the NMR must share Islamic broadcasting time slot, press release of 19 April 2005

"Zendtijd Islam gereserveerd voor nieuwe stichting", 08.03.2005

http://www.cvdm.nl/pages/actueel.asp?m=p&ID=1396

Islamic broadcasting time slot reserved for new foundation, press release of 8 March 2005

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