[AL] Bill on Public and Private Radio-Televisions

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A mixed working party comprising members of the Albanian Parliament's Committee for Culture and Mass Media and audiovisual specialists have drawn up preliminary draft legislation on public and private radio and television. Invited by the Albanian Government, the Council of Europe sent a small group of experts to Tirana in November to discuss the draft.

It is now expected that the revised version of the draft will shortly be submitted to the Parliament for discussion. It is still possible that the legislation could be adopted before the coming parliamentary elections in the spring.

Radiotelevizioni Shqiptar (RTVSH), the national (State) radio and television station in Albania, is currently operating on the basis of provisional legislation (Act of 19 November 1991), under which RTVSH is required to take account of the foundations of democratic pluralism, impartiality and objectivity in its programmes; programmes may not serve the interests of any one party, organisation or social force in a one-sided fashion. RTVSH is supervised by a Steering Council whose members are appointed by Parliament on proposals from the Committee for Mass Media.

However, the existing legal foundations and organisational structures are unsatisfactory when compared with the requirements for setting up a public radio and television station independent of the State in a democratic State. Nor are there any legal foundations for the creation of private commercial radio and television stations. The new legislation on public and private radio and television stations ought to fill in the present gaps; it is intended as a comprehensive modification of the audiovisual field. Thus in addition to provisions concerning public and private commercial stations there is also provision for setting up an independent governing body (the National Committee of Radio and Television) to deal with channel planning, cable broadcasting, and the terrestrial broadcasting of foreign radio and television programmes.

Experience has shown that the new democracies always come up against difficulties when making organisational provisions to ensure the necessary distance between radio and television stations and their governing bodies and the State. Thus in Albania at present a number of models are being discussed with a view to guaranteeing the independence of the National Committee of Radio and Television and the public Albanian radio and television station (RTVSH). The draft

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submitted in November leaves a number of questions on this unanswered.

Bill on Public and Private Radio-Televisions at the Republic of Albania.

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