[PT] Act on Public Radio and Television Ombudsman Approved by Parliament

IRIS 2006-2:1/29

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On 15 December 2005, the Portuguese Parliament approved Law proposal nº 12/X creating both a listeners' ombudsman and a viewers' ombudsman for the radio and television public services (see IRIS 2005-7: 17).

The Law proposal's main purpose in establishing these two new bodies is to promote independence from the State as well as public scrutiny in programming matters.

According to article nº 6 (1) of Law proposal nº 12/X, both the radio ombudsman and the television ombudsman shall have the following competences:

a) to receive and evaluate complaints and suggestions from listeners and spectators;

b) to produce statements about complains and suggestions;

c) to examine and to reach conclusions on the criteria and methods used in information and fictional programming broadcast by public radio and television;

d) to provide information to listeners regarding their concerns;

e) to guarantee a weekly TV or radio programme to inform the public of their views and

f) to produce an annual report.

According to the Minister responsible for the Media (Ministro dos Assuntos Parlamentares), Augusto Santos Silva, this governmental initiative stems from the belief that further incentive should be given to self-regulation, considering that such regulation and regulation exercised by external bodies are complementary: both contribute to improved supervision, deeper reflection and expanded public scrutiny.

These two ombudsmen will have annual mandates which may be renewed for a maximum term of three years. The Law approved by Parliament has not yet been promulgated by the President of the Republic. Considering a wide consensus was reached, it is not to be expected that the President of the Republic should send it

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back to Parliament for further analysis.

Proposta de Lei que cria os Provedores do Ouvinte e do Telespectador

http://www.governo.gov.pt/Portal/PT/Governos/Governos_Constitucionais/GC17/Ministerios/PCM/MAP/Comunicacao/Outros_Documentos/20050520_MAP_Doc_Provedor_Ouvinte_Telespectador.htm

Law proposal approved by the Council of Ministers on 12 December 2005

Debate da Proposta de Lei que cria Provedores do Ouvinte e do Telespectador - 2005-09-14 - Intervenção do Ministro dos Assuntos Parlamentares no debate sobre a Proposta de Lei que cria o Provedor do Ouvinte e o Provedor do Telespectador no Serviço Público de Rádio e Televisão

http://www.portugal.gov.pt/Portal/PT/Governos/Governos_Constitucionais/GC17/Ministerios/PCM/MAP/Comunicacao/Intervencoes/20050914_MAP_Int_Provedores_Ouvinte_Telespectador.htm

Speech by the Media Minister, Augusto Santos Silva, during parliamentary debates of 14 December 2005

Diário da Assembleia da República, X Legislatura, Reunião Plenária de 15 de Dezembro de 2005

http://www3.parlamento.pt/dari/DARI.aspx

Agenda of the National Assembly, 10th Legislature, Plenary Assembly of 15 December 2005

Diário da Assembleia da República (DAR) Electrónico, 1ª Série, DAR I Série, nº 068, 2005-12-16.

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