[NL] Dispute over Broadcasting Time Between Muslim Organisations Resolved

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A long-standing dispute, involving several Muslim organisations, over broadcasting time has finally been resolved by the Dutch Media Authority (see IRIS 2007-6: 14). Article 39f of the Dutch Media Act sets out the rules concerning religious broadcasting time and has enabled several different faiths existing in the Netherlands to reach out to their followers by airing programmes by means of allocated broadcasting time.

Different organisations representing Dutch Muslims had been vying for air time since 1 September 2005. That date marked the beginning of the Dutch Media Authority's reshuffling of air time allocated to ecclesiastic organisations and groupings representing spiritual currents (scheduled every five years). According to Article 39f of the Dutch Media Act, each faith can organise representation of itself and claim broadcasting time. However, in practice, only one organisation, deemed to be the most representative of the faith's followers, is eligible for the air time.

Several organisations aspired to represent Muslim religious interests and no consensus could be reached between them to put forward a single organisation. This divisiveness has now come to an end thanks to the recently agreed cooperation between two organisations which have decided to merge into a single one: *Stichting Verzorging Islamitische Zendtijd* (Foundation for Islamic Airtime - SVIZ). The Dutch Media Authority is satisfied with this cooperation and has duly allocated broadcasting time to this new organisation. The new foundation will be responsible for the supervision and attribution of time slots to two entities which will each be responsible for their own programming. This arrangement is based on the same model which brought together the different currents of Dutch protestants into a single organisation.

Commissariaat wijst moslimzendtijd toe aan SVIZ, 04/10/2007

http://www.cvdm.nl/content.jsp?objectid=899

Media Authority allocates airtime to SVIZ, press release of 4 October 2007

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