[FR] Commission Established to Develop a New Model of Public Service Television

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Having announced the probable abolition of advertising on public service channels (see IRIS 2008-2: 12), the French President Nicolas Sarkozy has decided to create a commission to develop a new model of public service television. Commission members will include parliamentarians and professionals in the sector, and it will be chaired by Jean-François Copé. Its purpose will be to "propose a new identity for the public sector audiovisual scene in the digital age, and make proposals enabling the Government to draw up the new list of missions and specifications for the France Télévisions group. It will also propose methods for financing the new economic model for public service television".

Four working parties were set up at the first meeting on 27 February – on the cultural model for public service television in the future, on its economic model, on development and diversification, and on governance. The commission's first task will be to consider the financing of France Télévisions for 2008 and 2009, to compensate for the loss of income from advertising. Proposals will need to be put forward by mid-April. Advertising would be ended either by total abolition, starting on 1 January 2009, or by gradual abolition, starting with abolition after 8 p.m. Regarding future resources, Nicolas Sarkozy has asked the commission to look into the introduction of a mix of contributions from the private channels and telecom operators. Private radio and the press would not be taxed, however, in order to help them "cope with the digital revolution", according to the French President. He also wanted to reassure the employees of France Télévisions, by promising that "each euro of income from advertising" would be "compensated for by one euro of public resources, not only in 2009 but even in 2008" by means of a "capital endowment". Compensation for abolishing advertising should generate financing requirements amounting to EUR 1,147 million for 2009, according to sources close to France Télévisions. Although an increase in the licence fee seems to have been excluded as a possibility, a broader fee base is apparently under consideration.

Mr Copé also said that the commission was obviously intended to broach the issue of the method for appointing future managing directors of France Télévisions within the workshop on the "governance model", which will be considering relations between the State and France Télévisions, and between France Télévisions and the national audiovisual regulatory authority (*Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel* – CSA), and its internal organisation. The commission, which

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insists on its independence, will hear “everyone with anything to say”, and an Internet site will be launched (www.matelepublique.fr) in order to give other professionals and viewers an opportunity to express their opinions. The commission is to submit an interim report on 16 April 2008, before its final report, expected on 31 May 2008.

Création par le Président de la République d'une commission pour la nouvelle télévision publique, communiqué de l’Elysée du 16 février 2008

http://www.elysee.fr/documents/index.php?lang=fr&mode=view&cat_id=5&press_id=1046

Creation by the French President of a commission to develop a new model of public service television; Elysée press release dated 16 February 2008

Composition de la commission pour la nouvelle télévision publique, communiqué de l’Elysée du 19 février 2008

http://www.elysee.fr/documents/index.php?mode=view&lang=fr&cat_id=5&press_id=1055

Composition of the Commission for new-style public-service television; Elysée press release dated 19 February 2008

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