[FR] Commission on a New Model of Public Television Submits its “Method Report”

IRIS 2008-5:1/14

Amélie Blocman
Légipresse

As was previously announced (see IRIS 2008-4: 14), the Commission on a new model of public television instituted by Nicolas Sarkozy and chaired by MP Jean-François Copé submitted an interim report – called a “method report” – on 16 April 2008. Mr Copé stated that both the work involved and the purpose of the commission’s work “was much wider that merely the issues of abolishing advertising and financing”; in fact it involved “inventing a new model for public service television for the twenty-first century, covering its development, its content and its governance”. Recalling the topics of the commission’s four workshops and the principles for organising their work, the method report presented a series of “working hypotheses”, set out in detail for each workshop. On the “development model”, the commission called on France Télévisions to multiply its offer of programmes using all the media (Internet, third-generation mobile phones, VoD, etc), which, in the medium and long term, could generate income, even if initial investment would be necessary. On the “cultural and creation model”, and following the same logic, public service television “should provide the French public with an overall offer with extended content” and adopt a position as “the place for risk-taking, innovation, and research”. The section on “governance” provided an opportunity to advocate transforming France Télévisions into a “single company” (instead of the 49 companies that it comprises at present), headed by a chairman whose remit would coincide with the contract of objectives and resources signed every five years with the State. Lastly, the “economic model” workshop, the results of which were the most keenly anticipated, insisted firstly on “the importance of not fixing any hypotheses”, stating that “it is the conclusions on the models for development, culture and governance that will lead to the specific establishment of the level of resources to be mobilised”. The commission therefore feels it is necessary to favour the gradual implementation of the ban on advertising announced by the French President in January. A first stage would be envisaged in 2009, for a period ending with the transition to all digital at the end of 2011. Meanwhile, the Commission advocates the payment of EUR 150 million, corresponding to the estimated loss in advertising revenue for 2008, but does not give any details as to the method for carrying this out (“the accounting methods (will be) determined by the Government and will of course be under the sole responsibility of the Government”). As soon as this conclusion was stated, there were many expressions of concern and criticism. The Socialist members of the commission

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

denounced the absence of any approach to financing the abolition of advertising, condemning the “taboo” of a possible increase in the licence fee, which was also being claimed by the professional unions of audiovisual producers, and it is also the case that the French President undertook to not increase the fee. Similarly, the trade unions at France Télévisions denounced the “vacuum” of the interim report, which left “total uncertainty in economic terms”, whereby they felt that the public audiovisual sector was “in great danger”. Let us hope that their fears will be dispelled when the commission submits its final report on 25 June 2008.

Commission for new-style public television – method report submitted to the President of the French Republic on 16 April 2008

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026