[ES] Draft Law on the Funding of RTVE Corporation

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Trinidad García Leiva
Universidad Carlos III, Madrid

In May 2009, a draft law reforming the funding of the Corporación de Radio y Televisión Española (RTVE), the national public service broadcaster, was presented to the Spanish Parliament. The original text, approved by the Cabinet (see IRIS 2009-6: 10), included the elimination of advertising on Televisión Española (TVE) and proposed a new financial equilibrium that would be achieved through State subsidy and income originating from three different types of taxes: an existing one on the use of spectrum frequencies, and two new ones, to be paid by national commercial broadcasters (both pay and free-to-air) and telecommunications operators offering audiovisual services.

The Congress debated and considered amendments for the most part in June, including the most important details described below:

- If the new tax to be paid by national commercial free-to-air operators is to be 3% of their gross financial income and the one to be faced by pay-TV operators and telecommunications companies is to be 1.5% and 0.9%, respectively, it has been specified that the latter will not contribute with more than 25% of the Corporation's total income and that, in turn, free-to-air and pay-TV operators will not add beyond 15% and 20%. The Telecommunications Market Commission, CMT, will analyse the proportionality of contributions.

- Additionally, direct support from the State is guaranteed so as to reach financial equilibrium, in case other resources are reduced, as long as the Corporation’s expenditure is in line with a pre-approved budget.

- The necessity of increasing programmes to educate and entertain the youngest section of the audience has been outlined. It has been specified that from Monday to Friday 30% of the offerings between 17:00h and 21:00h should be directed at children from 4 to 12 years of age. During holidays such programming should be offered from 9:00h to 20:00h and, once the switch-off of analogue television has taken place, it will be broadcast making use of the multilingual system.

- The Corporation will have the possibility of buying sports rights limited to 10% of its total annual budget - excluding the Olympic and Paralympic Games - from a general interest sporting events list designed by the Audiovisual Council, which is to be created by the Audiovisual Draft Law.

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- A commitment to making programming as accessible as possible to all audiences, including those with any kind of disability, has been included. Before 1 January 2013, TVE will have to deliver subtitles in at least 90% of its offerings and, at least 10 hours per week including audio description and sign language.

- The Corporation will have to provide information regularly about debates in Parliament and broadcast live those sessions of special interest to citizens.

This report with amendments on the draft law was sent by mid-July to the Senate, where it could either be simply approved or else amended again. In the latter case, the text would go back to Congress in September.

Proyecto de Ley de financiación de la Corporación de Radio y Televisión Española

http://www.congreso.es/public_oficiales/L9/CONG/BOCG/A/A_027-01.PDF

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Texto remitido por el Congreso. Proyecto de Ley de financiación de la Corporación de Radio y Televisión Española

http://www.congreso.es/public_oficiales/L9/SEN/BOCG/II/II0022A.PDF

Draft Law on the funding RTVE Corporation. Amended text by the Parliament.

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