

[BA] Public Broadcasting Still Facing Obstacles

IRIS 2010-4:1/7

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The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) has expressed its strong concern about the situation of public service broadcasting in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).

The EBU Director General sent a letter to both Houses of the Parliament of BiH on 18 February 2010, copied to the joint Presidency and the Prime Minister, calling upon them to act in favour of public service broadcasting. This letter was also copied to the main international actors in the post-Dayton BiH, including the Council of Europe, the OSCE and UNESCO.

The letter states, inter alia, that “a media law in line with European standards came into force on 8 January 2006, but unfortunately it has not been implemented and is still being obstructed. This is very damaging to public broadcasting in your country, to the interests of your citizens, and to Bosnia-Herzegovina's ambitions to join mainstream Europe.”

Delays arising in the digitisation process were also mentioned, which if continued, could isolate the country from the rest of Europe.

One specific issue in particular raised concerns among the citizens of BiH: the announcement that viewers in BiH would be denied access to the Eurovision Song Contest and to the World Cup if the EBU's member in BiH does not start to make substantial repayments of its debt to the Union over the coming months.

The EBU's Member in BiH is Bosnia and Herzegovina Radio Television (BHRT), a country wide public broadcaster. BHRT is in arrears amounting to Swiss Francs 2,9 million, arising from the 2002 to 2009 period.

Press release, EBU calls on Bosnia-Herzegovina to act on public broadcasting

http://www.ebu.ch/en/union/news/2009/tcm_6-67366.php?display=EN

