# [MK] Legal Amendments Concerning the Macedonian Public Broadcasting Service

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On 28 October 2010, the Macedonian Broadcasting Law was amended. After years of underfunding and dependence on grants from the Government to cover its running costs, the latest amendments to the Broadcasting Law should ensure independent and stable financing of the Macedonian Public Broadcasting Service (Macedonian Radio and Television - MRT).

The financing model of the PBS, defined in the Broadcasting Law adopted in 2005 (see IRIS 2006-4: 17/30) included an obligation on MRT to generate a list of households and legal entities that are obliged to pay the broadcasting fee, and to collect this 'public tax'. However, MRT could not establish an effective mechanism for self-funding. Dozens of roundtables, conferences and public discussions, some of them also supported by international organisations like OSCE, were held in order to find a proper solution to this problem. Not having a clear idea of how to reform MRT and due to the trade union of MRT strongly opposing the downsizing of staff and reducing of running costs, a couple of years ago the Government amended the Broadcasting Law, allowing MRT to start insolvency proceedings (see IRIS 2008-9: 16/26). This would have meant a complete shutdown of the PBS. Due to pressure coming from the EU and the opposition these amendments were never enforced. However, the problem with the funding of MRT remained and it was noted in the latest EU Country Progress Report, which criticised the country for not having an effective funding mechanism for its PSB that would ensure non-biased reporting.

Since the broadcasting fee is a public tax, the recent amendments to the Broadcasting Law envisage that the Public Revenue Office will collect the fee, because it has the means and the legal authority to perform such an activity, while MRT as a public enterprise did not have means to force the citizens to pay the fee.

### *Zakon za izmenuvanje i dopolnuvanje na Zakonot za Radiodifuznata dejnost 2010*

http://www.srd.org.mk/images/stories/Zakon_za_izmenuvanje__i_dopolnuvanje_na_Zakonot_za_Radiodifuznata_dejnost_2010.pdf

*Amendment to the Broadcasting Law, 28 October 2010*

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