[FI] Act concerning the Funding of Public Service Broadcasting

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On 20 June 2012, the Act amending Act on Yleisradio Oy and Act on the State Television and Radio Fund was adopted by the Finnish Parliament.

Yleisradio Oy (YLE) is Finland's national public service broadcasting company. YLE operates four national television channels and six radio channels and services complemented by 25 regional radio programmes. YLE is 99.9 % state-owned and is supervised by a Supervisory Board appointed by the Parliament. It operates under the Act on Yleisradio Oy. Until the end of 2012, its activities are financed by the television license revenue. The annual television license in Finland is EUR 252.25 per household.

The revision of the Act guarantees the funding of YLE, clarifies the supervision of the company’s public broadcasting service and specifies the task of the public broadcasting service.

The act replaces YLE’s existing obligation to provide full public service broadcasting with an obligation to provide a diverse and comprehensive range of television and radio programmes for all citizens on equal terms. The services can be offered regionally as well. YLE will also have to produce, create, improve and store domestic culture, art and entertainment. Furthermore, programmes targeted at young people should be emphasized.

YLE will be funded by a tax collected by the Finnish tax authorities. The YLE tax will be 0.68 % of the total amount of employees' wages and capital income, but not more than EUR 140 annually. YLE tax paid by legal persons (for example, limited liability companies or cooperatives) will be EUR 350, if the business or agricultural revenues exceed EUR 400,000. If the revenue exceeds EUR 1 million, the YLE-tax will amount EUR 700. The money will be directed into a special radio and television fund. The money amassed by the fund will be used to finance YLE's public service operations and improve radio and television activity. The sum will be specific for each taxpayer, and no longer be tied to the ownership of a television set.

The funding level for the year 2013 is EUR 500 million. From 2014 onwards the funding level will be reviewed in order to meet the increase in annual costs. The new finance model is to be adopted at the beginning of 2013. The new scheme

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will replace the earlier license fee scheme that has been used for more than 80 years.

The Supervisory Board will be empowered to make a prior assessment of the YLE's new services and functions to ensure that they will not compete with services provided by the private sector while benefitting from money raised by taxes. Parliament´s access to information will be improved by obliging the Supervisory Board to provide the Parliament with an annual report on the public service activities.

The Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority (FICORA, Viestintävirasto) will oversee that there is no price undercutting or cross-subsidies. The Regulatory authority will also have to monitor that the prohibition on advertising or having sponsors is respected. The Act also includes provisions for sanctions.

Hallituksen esitys eduskunnalle laeiksi Yleisradio Oy:stä annetun lain sekä valtion televisio- ja radiorahastosta annetun lain muuttamisesta

http://www.eduskunta.fi/faktatmp/utatmp/akxtmp/ev_64_2012_p.shtml

Act amending Act on Yleisradio Oy and Act on the State Television and Radio Fund, 20 June 2012

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