[DE] New State Treaty for the SWR

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On 3 July 2013, the Prime Minister of “Rheinland-Pfalz” and the Prime Minister of “Baden-Württemberg“ signed the New State Contract for the public broadcasting system in both countries, the Südwestrundfunk (SWR). The New State Treaty for the SWR came into force on 1 January 2014 and replaced the old State Treaty of 31 May 1997.

The new SWR-State-Treaty specifies the programme mandate of the public broadcasting including the online activities of the SWR and directed the programme to a younger audience. By creating more flexible structures, the new state contract wants to allow the SWR the establishment of a multimedia organization and the financial consolidation in difficult times (between 2010 and 2020 the SWR has to save 166 million Euro (= 15% of total budget)). Therefore, the basic principles of allocation and the assignment of business divisions are no longer regulated by the SWR-State-Treaty. Both things are now included in the main statutes and the administrative order of the SWR, whereby the SWR gets more freedom to regulate its own affairs (both the main statutes and the administrative order must be approved by the supervisory bodies of the SWR). With regard to the elimination of state’s contractual requirements, the supervisory bodies of the SWR not only have more freedom to act, they also have a greater responsibility for the design and the orientation of the SWR. The new state treaty sets the SWR in the position to develop a balanced overall concept and to create focal points in the individual business areas at the different locations.

Another important goal of the new SWR-State-Treaty is to strengthen the regional identity in the two countries Rheinland-Pfalz and Baden-Württemberg. The targets of the new state treaty are deeply rooted in the two countries, their regions and cities. Therefore, these regional roots should take a prominent role in the offers of the SWR. The regional diversity is expressed by the different locations of the SWR in the two capital cities of Mainz and Stuttgart, the third location in Baden-Baden and numerous other broadcast studios across the country. To find the right balance between decentralized organization and efficient uniform structures, the design of the SWR in detail is not made by the new state treaty. This is the task of the organs of the SWR, especially of the artistic director and the supervisory bodies.

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With regard to the composition and task assignment of the SWR supervisory bodies, the extension of the principle of distance from the state was an important policy objective. Under the new state treaty, the governments of both countries no longer send members to the Broadcasting Board and the Board of Directors is expanded with three non-government members. Through these measures, the editorial independence of the SWR should be secured and strengthened. In order to reflect the realities in today's society, the supervisory bodies of the SWR include for the first time Muslims and Sinti and Romanies. Furthermore, the new state contract determines binding requirements for a higher proportion of women in the Broadcasting Board and in the Board of Directors. Thus, the representation of women is to be strengthened in the supervisory bodies of the SWR.

To ensure transparency, the meetings of the Broadcasting Board are public and the decisions taken at those meetings shall be made available for everyone. In order to fulfill their transparency obligations, the members of the management must publish their remunerations. To strengthen the participation of employees, the Board of Directors has to take up a full voting member of the Staff Committee from each country. In addition, an editorial statute is to be installed, which should strengthen the participation rights of employees. The editorial statute regulates in detail the involvement of employees in programme matters, whereby the editorial independence is secured.

Staatsvertrag über den Südwestrundfunk

http://www.rlp.de/fileadmin/staatskanzlei/rlp.de/downloads/medien/Novellierter_SWR-Staatsvertrag.pdf

SWR-State-Treaty

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