[NL] Proposal for only one public broadcaster after the year 2000

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On 8 November 1996 the Dutch Government approved a proposal to grant after the year 2000, only one broadcasting licence for all the broadcasters broadcasting at present in the public broadcasting system of the Netherlands.

At the moment, the different broadcasters in the public broadcasting system have a licence for five years which will expire in 2000. The proposal of the Dutch Under-Secretary of State for Culture is a reaction to the recommendations on the future of the public broadcasting system made in June of this year by the Commissie Ververs (see IRIS 1996-7: 11).

The Government underlines the Commission's conclusion that a radical transformation of the public broadcasting system is essential for its survival. Contrary to the Commission's proposal, the Government chooses to create one strong public broadcaster, in which the different broadcasters will have to cooperate, and whose programmes are aimed at a broad public.

The Government plans to achieve the reorganisation of the public broadcasting system in two steps. The first part of the amendment to the Media Act (Mediawet) , which aims at restructuring the management system of the broadcasters in the public broadcasting system, has already been sent to the State Council (Raad van State) for evaluation and is planned to take effect in the course of 1997. The second stage - the introduction of one licenceis to be enacted before the year 2000. The exact substance of this amendment and its consequences are vague at the moment, but will be worked out by the Ministy of Culture in the near future. The Government also intends to give the public more influence on the programming. How this will be achieved is as yet uncertain, but `broadcaster elections' (suggested by the Commissie Ververs) are deemed to have possible negative effects on the co-operation between the public broadcasters. Other possible forms of consultation will therefore be taken into consideration as well.

Also part of the Government's plans are measures to improve the efficiency of the broadcasters to secure the financing of the public broadcasting system in the year 2000.

The text of the legislative proposal (first stage) is not available yet, since it is with the State Council for consultation. As soon as the proposal is made public, it will

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