[NL] Bill on the reorganisation of the public broadcasting system

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In IRIS 1997-2: 13 we reported on the proposal of the Dutch Government to reorganize the national public broadcasting system. At the time of publication, the exact text of the proposal was still confidential, anticipating on the evaluation of the proposal by the State Council (Raad van State) . This evaluation has now been published.

Consequently, the text of the proposal - also containing the Government's response to the remarks of the State Council - was sent to Parliament on 3 February 1997.

The proposal aims at what is called the `professionalization' of the national public broadcasting system until the year 2000, when the concessions of the various broadcasting associations that currently broadcast in the public broadcasting system, will expire. In the new structure, a Board of Directors, appointed by the Minister of Culture, will manage the new professional organisation. The different broadcasting associations will remain responsible for producing the programmes. They will be represented on the Boards of the three television channels as well as in the Supervisory Board. For each channel, there will be a coordinator responsible for coordinating the channel's programming.

The Government also proposes that the broadcasting associations contribute themselves a larger amount of money to their programming; as from 1998, each broadcaster would have to contribute 15 guilders per member per year to help cover the cost of its programmes. This money is expected to come from the members (i.e., the audience) of the broadcasting associations. To this end, the Government proposes to increase their membership fee to 25 guilders per member per year. The Government does not share the State Council's fear that this increase will result in many resignations by present members. A subscriber to a programme guide of one of the broadcasting associations in the public broadcasting system, will no longer automatically become a member of that broadcasting association, as is the case today.

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