[NL] State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science Publishes Plans for the Future of the Dutch Public Broadcasting System

IRIS 2015-1:1/33

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On 13 October 2014, the State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science wrote a 25-page letter to the House of Representatives reporting the cabinet's plans to strengthen the Dutch public television broadcasting system. The public broadcasting system has been the object of large budget cuts since 2013 and will have to merge from 21 to eight public broadcasting organisations before 2016. According to the state secretary, the public broadcaster has to produce more innovative and distinctive television programmes to be able to stay relevant in a changing media landscape.

In his letter, the state secretary questioned the necessity of a public broadcasting system. The market for broadcasting organisations in the Netherlands has become more diverse due to digitalisation, globalisation and convergence. However, the state secretary concluded that there is a growing need for a public broadcaster with the duties of being an independent and reliable source of information. A new public broadcasting system should produce high-quality drama or educational shows, content which reflects the diversity of Dutch culture, reliable news, as well as being a platform for innovative ideas.

The cabinet wants to break up the monopoly of the public broadcasting organisations over the production of television programmes. The plan is to oblige public broadcasting organisations to hand over 50% of their total programme budget to external parties. This way, producers and social and cultural institutions will have direct access to public broadcasting, which stimulates creative competition. To achieve this goal, the cabinet will have to remove a number of guaranties from the Dutch media law. Furthermore, different tasks, now divided between the public broadcasting organisations, will be covered by a single Dutch public broadcasting organisation. The central organisation will receive all income and rights from television productions.

The state secretary will present necessary amendments in 2015. The plans will be discussed by the House of Representatives. The state secretary announced that all measures must be taken before 1 January 2016.

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Letter from state secretary Dekker (Education, Culture and Science) to the House of Representatives concerning the future of public broadcasting (Brief van staatssecretaris Dekker (OCW) aan de Tweede Kamer over de toekomst van het publieke mediabestel)

http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2014/10/13/kamerbrief-over-toekomst-van-het-publieke-mediabestel.html

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