[ME] Public Service Broadcasting in search of stable financing

IRIS 2015-6:1/26

Daniela Brkic
KRUG Communications & Media, Montenegro

The Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on Public Broadcasting Services of Montenegro introduces a new model of financing for the national Public Service Broadcaster (Radio Televizija Crne Gore - RTCG). Instead of a fixed percentage of 1.2 of the general public revenues, the state would allocate 0.3% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the realisation of basic activities of RTCG.

A limitation has been introduced, according to which RTCG cannot use funds from the budget of Montenegro for the financing of commercial audiovisual services (cross-subsidisation). Also, the funds are conditioned by the signing of an agreement between the Government of Montenegro and RTCG. This way, funding from the budget would increase by around 30%, from an average of EUR 7-8 million.

As explained in the Draft, the reason for the amendments is further harmonisation with the EU rules on state subsidies and also the deteriorating general financial situation, which has led to a decrease in RTCG funding of around EUR 3 million from 2009 to 2013.

The proposal was drafted with the help of the European Broadcasting Union, but part of the domestic and international professional public do not support the proposed model. In the Comments to the Law drafted for the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, it was pointed out that these changes would be a step back in terms of the independence of RTCG. The proposed level of financing (state budget as a dominant source of financing) would expose the public service broadcaster to political influence.

Stronger safety mechanisms from state influence are suggested, such as an act on self-regulation, since different models of financing, such as a subscription fee, have proved inefficient in practice. The subscription fee model had been in force in 2007 and 2008, but only 30% of the fees, which were included in the telecommunication bill and later the electricity bill, were successfully collected.

The amendments were drafted in November 2014, but they haven’t yet reached the Parliament.

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

Vlada Crne Gore - Predlozi zakona

http://www.gov.me/biblioteka/predlozi-zakona

Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on Public Broadcasting Services of Montenegro

Sandra Basic Hrvatin - Komentari na Zakon o RTCG 11.11.2014

http://www.ardcg.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&gid=1253&Itemid=26

Comments to the Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on Public Broadcasting Services of Montenegro

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026