[DK] New Broadcasting Act

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The Danish Broadcasting Act was amended in December 1996. The new provisions came into force in January 1997. The background for the amendments is the political agreement from May last year between the government and all parties in the Parliament (except the left-wing Enhedslisten) on the framework for the electronic media for 1997-2000.

The main features of the amendments are the following: The two public service broadcasters Danmarks Radio (radio and TV) and TV 2 (TV only) are given increased economic freedom.

The two broadcasters will be allowed to establish subsidiary companies for other media activities than public service broadcasting (pay television, telecommunication services etc.). Such activities may be carried out in co-operation with private companies.

The public service commitments are strengthened, e.g., concerning financial involvement in Danish film production and the use of independent producers. An annual "public service report" on the fulfilment of the commitments must be published by the broadcasters.

The most important change as far as local radio and television is concerned is that local stations - under certain conditions - will be allowed to network. This was not possible under the former Broadcasting Act. Networking between local radio stations has been limited to news and current affairs programmes and programmes broadcast during the night. Among the conditions for local TV are that the networking-stations broadcast one hour daily of local programmes and that they allow non-commercial stations to broadcast in "windows" three hours daily. The local TV-stations, which participate in networking, will have to pay an annual fee for their licence. Non-commercial local radio and television stations are entitled to receive financial support from the government. The total amount is 50 mio. DKK per year.

Finally, the allowed amount of advertising has been raised from 10 to 15 percent of the daily broadcasting time.

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