

[UA] EBU concerned about underfunding of public broadcasting in Ukraine

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The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) has expressed concern about the financial situation of public broadcasting in Ukraine, where the 2018 state budget provided only around half of the funding stipulated in the Law on Public Television and Radio Broadcasting. According to the law, 0.2% of the state budget should be spent on public broadcasting, which amounted to around EUR 40 million last year. The EBU stressed that this was already one of the smallest budgets in Europe, with public broadcasters in other countries enjoying much greater financial means even though some of them covered smaller populations and regions.

The EBU members stressed that establishing a sustainable public service media landscape was an important strategic aim of Ukraine in the light of recent political reforms. Operating robust and independent broadcasters was a crucial weapon in the fight against corruption and a tool to promote respect for the rule of law. Independent broadcasting was also important for Ukraine's European integration.

The Public Broadcasting Company of Ukraine (UA:PBC) also expressed concern that the small budget could limit its ability to provide free, critical and independent reporting, which was especially significant on the eve of forthcoming elections. The UA:PBC Director General said that public broadcasters were suffering very hard times. However, it was a time of reform, and the greatest challenge was to transform a former state company into an independent public service broadcaster. The lack of required funding undermined the whole reform process and the very future of Ukrainian broadcasting.

The EBU is therefore urging the Ukrainian Government to ensure appropriate, fair and unconditional funding for UA:PBC, in line with Ukrainian law and European standards.

The EBU played a crucial role in the creation of UA:PBC, sending a delegation to Kyiv in 2014 to advise the Ukrainians on how to merge the country's existing public broadcasting organisations.

EBU calls on Ukrainian Government to ensure proper funding for UA:PBC (EBU press release), 19 September 2017

<https://www.ebu.ch/news/2017/09/ebu-calls-on-ukrainian-government-to-ensure-proper-funding-for-uapbc>

