[AT] Media policy in government programme

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Austria's new People's Party/Freedom Party coalition has unveiled its government programme for the legislative period until 2022, which contains a number of elements related to media policy.

The programme describes the media landscape as being in a period of radical change, digitisation as progressing rapidly and the resulting upheavals as so serious that media policy needs to be completely overhauled. In particular, it says that politicians must ensure that the media provide specifically Austrian content.

The government programme lists five objectives in this regard: the further development of the public service remit; the active promotion of Austrian content; the creation of fair conditions in a global digital market; the structural reform of media institutions and authorities; and a public debate on basic media policy issues.

In order to further develop the public service remit, the programme aims to ensure that high-quality news content is offered to as many people as possible in order to strengthen democratic public debate. The focus should be not only on Austrian content, but also on protecting Austria's identity by promoting Austrian artists, sportsmen/women, and producers.

With regard to the second objective, the active promotion of Austrian content, the government is committed to comprehensive digitisation as far as this is possible in the expansion of online media, in particular in television, radio and the press. This would be achieved by creating a modern legal framework and adapting aid mechanisms in order to give Austrian media companies freedom to innovate and flexibility for the necessary processes of change. Support for up-and-coming journalists through training provided by Austrian media companies will also play a prominent role.

Fair conditions in a global digital market would be created through measures designed to establish a level playing field in all areas of competition. This will require close alignment with EU law. However, if this proves unfeasible, the necessary steps will, as far as possible, be taken through Austrian legislation. The Republic of Austria will therefore strive, if necessary, to provide the initial impulse for a pan-European solution in order to create the basic conditions for international media companies that will enable national media companies to

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survive in the market.

In order to achieve the fourth objective, that is, the structural reform of media institutions and authorities, the different sources of funding will be streamlined and made clearer, including in the field of film aid. Companies and authorities with outsourced responsibilities, such as the RTR (regulatory authority for broadcasting and telecommunications) and KommAustria, will be restructured. The Medientransparenzgesetz (Media Transparency Act) will also be evaluated with the aim of reducing bureaucracy.

Since all these media policy reforms are highly relevant to democracy, the widespread involvement of stakeholders and of the public as a whole will be sought. For this reason, the government is planning, in preparation for the package of media measures, to organise a comprehensive media enquiry involving all stakeholders and civil society.

Another aspect of the programme that is relevant to media policy is the digital policy that is designed to enable Austria to take a leading role in future global competition.

Regierungsprogramm 2017-2022

https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/documents/131008/569203/Regierungsprogramm_2017%E2%80%932022.pdf/b2fe3f65-5a04-47b6-913d-2fe512ff4ce6

Government programme 2017-2022

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