[FR] Public audiovisual reform bill announced

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On 3 January 2018, at his new year reception for the media, the President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron, confirmed that a public audiovisual reform bill would be tabled in 2018. He thought it was “necessary to hold a detailed and very dispassionate review of public audiovisual regulations”. Therefore, by the end of the first quarter of 2018, the committee working on behalf the Minister of Culture, Françoise Nyssen, will submit shared, costed and structured proposals for the “ambitious transformation of the public audiovisual sector” that she announced on 21 December 2017. Input will be provided from various sources: interviews will be conducted with audiovisual stakeholders in France and abroad, consultations will be held with the parliamentary working group set up to examine this issue and meetings will take place with the heads of the public audiovisual institutions. The Minister of Culture described five areas of work to be covered by the proposals, as well as a timetable: 1) recapturing young audiences (“thinking about editorial content, as well as media and new types of use”); 2) international cooperation (“in particular, developing foreign-language programmes, co-productions and cooperation in relation to distribution”); 3) local services (“increasing cooperation between regional television and radio networks”); 4) joint online services (“treating public broadcasters as global media”); 5) strengthening synergies on common public audiovisual resources (“especially training - a major factor for dealing with changes to the audiovisual sector”). The main question concerns content and how public broadcasters reach their audiences. Their governance does not appear to be a priority at the present time.

The President of the Republic also castigated the so-called “fake news” phenomenon, especially during election campaigns, and promised that a new bill to combat it would soon be tabled. “During elections, content on Internet platforms will not be subject to the same rules,” he announced. Emmanuel Macron also said that, following a full review, the CSA (the national audiovisual regulator) would be given extra powers during 2018 “to fight any destabilisation attempt by television channels controlled or influenced by foreign states”. In particular, taking into account all their content, including Internet-based output, the audiovisual regulator will be able to refuse to sign agreements with such channels. It will also be able to suspend or cancel such agreements if any attempt is made to affect the election result, whether during the pre-election or election period. These new measures will require technical intermediaries to respond quickly by removing any illicit content as soon as it is brought to their attention.

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Discours du Président de la République Emmanuel Macron à l'occasion des vœux à la presse, 3 janvier 2018

http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/discours-du-president-de-la-republique-emmanuel-macron-a-l-occasion-des-v-ux-a-la-presse/

Speech of the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron at his new year reception for the media, 3 January 2018

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