[IS] Commission on the operating environment of independent media delivers report

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On 25 January 2018, the Commission on the operating environment of independent media presented to the Icelandic Minister of Culture and Education, Ms. Lilja Alfreðsdóttir, its report entitled “The operation environment of the media - Commission proposals on an improved operation environment of independent media.” The Commission proposed various changes to the current media policy instrument: firstly, a time-limited 25% refund of costs directly related to the production of news and current affairs in the media. The refund will apply to all licensed and registered media; television, radio, newspapers, magazines and web media that cover news and current affairs. This means that media service providers can only apply for a refund owing to the cost of the news department, but not the cost of producing media content unrelated to news and current affairs. Secondly, the majority of the Commission proposed that the public service broadcaster RÚV withdraw from the advertising market as soon as possible. Two members (out of five) of the Commission did not support the proposal and provided a joint dissenting opinion. Thirdly, VAT on all media subscriptions and retail sales (including Internet media and on-demand services) should be lowered to 11% (from the current 24%.)

Fourthly, the majority of the Commission proposed that “commercial communications” in respect of alcoholic beverages and tobacco products should be allowed, within the framework of international commitments. Two members of the Commission did not support the proposal and provided a joint dissenting opinion. Fifthly, a partial refund of the cost of providing Icelandic subtitles and Icelandic dubbing within an audiovisual media content (both linear and on-demand). Sixthly, media service providers should be able to apply for exemptions from the obligation to provide Icelandic subtitles and Icelandic dubbing owing to special circumstances to the Icelandic regulator for the media (the Media Commission) Lastly, the Commission proposed that media advertising bought by government organisations and municipalities should be transparent with regard to the identity of the organisation funding it, the identity of the media receiving the funding and the amount of money spent on advertising ..

The former Icelandic Minister of Culture and Education, Mr Illugi Gunnarsson, appointed the Commission in 30 December 2016 with a mandate to evaluate the operating environment of independent media and propose changes to the legal environment and/or other necessary changes with the purpose of improving the

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operating environment of independent media. The current Minister of Culture and Education, Ms Lilja Alfreðsdóttir, has welcomed the proposals and said that they will be helpful in shaping policy and further government action to strengthen the operation of independent media. Furthermore, the Minister has decided to create a new policy strategy for Icelandic media and increase the efforts of the Iceland Government in support of independent media in Iceland.

Rekstrarumhverfi fjölmiðla - Tillögur nefndar um bætt rekstrarumhverfi einkarekinna fjölmiðla, 25. janúar 2018

https://www.stjornarradid.is/lisalib/getfile.aspx?itemid=bbaa2bba-01b8-11e8-9423-005056bc4d74

The operation environment of the media - Commission proposals on an improved operation environment of independent media, 25 January 2018

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