[FI] Finnish government adopts a Media Policy Programme resolution

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In July 2018, the Finnish Government adopted a resolution on the Media Policy Programme. The resolution includes objectives and measures extending all the way to 2023, while engaging various ministries across a number of sectors. All in all, 23 action points for seven different topics are envisioned.

The starting point for the resolution dates back to 2017 when the goverment decided to begin the preparation of a Media Policy Programme as part of its key project on digital business. The programme was prepared in cooperation with stakeholders, while a report (LVM 4/2018) on the current state of media policy was produced by the universities of Helsinki and Tampere to support the preparation. Alongside a description of the status quo, the report includes a model for a measurement tool, based on the results of the study, and accommodating 26 variables and 52 indicators for monitoring changes in the Finnish media and communication policy.

The Media Policy Programme resolution aims to safeguard diversity and pluralism in Finnish media, while supporting accountability, accessibility, cooperation and participation. The importance of media and journalistic content for society and democracy is acknowledged, together with the need to combat disinformation and promote citizens' opportunities to receive diverse and reliable information. For its part, technology neutrality is hailed as an important starting point for media and communications policy. Moreover, the programme does not interfere with the mandate of the national public service broadcaster, Yleisradio (Yle). Nonetheless, cooperation between Yle and commercial media companies is promoted.

The objectives and measures as proposed include the following: (1) Support for accountable media and journalism: decreased VAT for electronic publications (considering EU law); boosting innovation; (2) Foreseeable regulation, the impact at EU level: a level playing field and consideration for platforms, including scrutiny for algorithms and uniform rules for data utilisation; (3) Support for digital distribution: the importance of fast broadband access; testing new ways of distribution (for example 5G broadcasting); (4) Enhanced media literacy and related skills: targeting new groups with media education (adults); combatting disinformation and hybrid operations/influencing; (5) Increased awareness of disinformation, combatting hate speech and illegal content: fact checking, in

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cooperation with social media platforms; combatting hatred against journalists; (6) Accessibility via technology: Yle's role in development, coupled with cooperation across the field; and (7) Cooperation and participation of stakeholders in the preparation of media policy: the establisment of a media policy network which will meet regularly and engage officials, companies, producers, researchers and NGOs; systematic monitoring of media policy; further development of the measurement tool modelled in the background report (LVM 4/2018).

The measures of the resolution will be carried out within the framework of the state budget, while EU funding might also be applicable. The execution of the objectives and measures will be monitored in the media policy network. The state of policy will be regularly mapped by conducting cross-sectoral research.

Liikenne- ja viestintäministeriö, Valtioneuvoston periaatepäätös mediapoliittisesta ohjelmasta, 5.7.2018

https://valtioneuvosto.fi/paatokset/paatos?decisionId=0900908f805c5853

Ministry of Transport and Communications, Government resolution on the Media Policy Programme, 5 July 2018

Marko Ala-Fossi et al., Media- ja viestintäpolitiikan nykytila ja sen mittaaminen. Liikenne- ja viestintäministeriön julkaisuja 4/2018

http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/160714/04_18_Media-%20ja-viestintapolitiikan-nykytila.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

The state of media- and communications policy and how to measure it. Publications of the Ministry of Transport and Communications 4/2018

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