

[FR] Minister for Culture gives details of upcoming audiovisual reform

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On 31 January 2019 during a New Year address, the Minister for Culture, Franck Riester, announced that he would be submitting new legislation reforming the audiovisual sector to the Council of Ministers in the summer. This will consist of three parts: one governing regulation, one in respect of Act No. 86-1067 of 30 September 1986, as amended, on Freedom of Communication, and one on the public audiovisual sector. The Minister had earlier announced that the bill would be debated in Parliament after the summer recess, in September or October - at any rate no later than the start of 2020. He explained that he wished to retain the scheme for funding new audiovisual works, and reiterated the need to adapt it in order to compel the VODS platforms to contribute to funding for new works in the light of the transposition of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AMSD). The Minister has also announced his “desire to rebalance the tax scheme underpinning the National Centre for Cinematography and Animation (Centre National de la Cinématographie et de l’Image Animée - CNC) between the traditional stakeholders and new arrivals” and at the same time to allow “the traditional players more room for manoeuvre in seeking new sources of funding and returning to a growth situation”. He added: “Reforming the 1986 Act should enable us to adapt our regulations to the new challenges of the digital era [because] the people of France don’t understand why the television channels and radio stations have to keep to strict rules protecting the public when hate-speak, racist, anti-Semitic and homophobic slurs and “fake news” are constantly being broadcast on the Internet with no supervision whatsoever.” The transposition of the AMS Directive would make it possible to extend the jurisdiction of the national audiovisual regulatory authority (Conseil Supérieur de l’Audiovisuel - CSA), enabling it to combat hateful content on video-sharing platforms. Recalling France’s position on the subject, Mr Riester added that he wanted to go even further and dislodge the platforms from their principle of not taking any responsibility. The announced reform of the audiovisual sector will also include an important section on the transformation of the public audiovisual sector: the Minister wants to “transform the governance and organisation of the sector to render it stronger in carrying out its redefined missions” with an “programming that is distinctive, demanding and attractive, [and] more digital and closer to the man in the street”.

Lastly, parallel to stressing the need to combat the broadcasting of “fake news”, the Minister reiterated the current thinking regarding the creation of an ethics

body for the press. In October 2018, a mission on setting up a council to oversee ethical standards in news-gathering was entrusted to Emmanuel Hoog by the previous Minister for Culture. The mission's conclusions are to be presented by the end of February. "I think that such a body could be useful both for the profession and for our democracy. But nothing has been decided yet. Everything will be done in cooperation with the professionals", said the Minister for Culture.

Discours de Franck Riester, ministre de la Culture, prononcé à l'occasion de la cérémonie des vœux aux professionnels de la culture, 31 janvier 2019,

<http://www.culture.gouv.fr/Presse/Discours/Discours-de-Franck-Riester-ministre-de-la-Culture-prononce-a-l-occasion-de-la-ceremonie-des-voeux-aux-professionnels-de-la-culture-jeudi-31-janvier-2019>

