[NL] Minister establishes funding scheme for local public broadcasters during COVID-19

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On 7 April 2020, Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science Arie Slob allocated EUR 11 million to help local public broadcasters and local newspapers left in need because of the COVID-19 crisis. To prevent people from being deprived of information, local broadcasters and newspapers will receive between EUR 4 000 and EUR 10 000 from a temporary support fund. The amount received will depend on their circulation and outreach.

Local media is often dependent on advertising revenues, which, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, have been significantly reduced. For local media, this is difficult to absorb since they often have limited reserves. The contribution from the support fund will therefore help to keep the local information supply going.

For the funding, the Dutch Government has joined forces with the Association of Dutch municipalities (Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten). Minister Slob stated that municipalities were primarily responsible for the local media and should therefore contribute; for example, purchasing advertisements can be a veiled contribution by municipalities.

From 11 April up until 19 April 2020, local public broadcasters and local newspapers can apply for a one-off contribution from the Dutch Journalism Fund's support fund (Stimuleringsfonds voor de Journalistiek).

This funding scheme is on top of the generic measures already taken by the Dutch Government to support companies. Both national media organisations and journalists can benefit from them. These measures include extra support for freelancers and the postponement of the payment of various taxes. In addition, EUR 2 million will be made available from Regional Public Broadcasting (Regionale Publieke Omroep) (see IRIS 2016-5/25) in order to boost regional and local journalism.

Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, Extra ondersteuning voor getroffen lokale en regionale media omroepen, 7 april 2020

https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/regering/bewindspersonen/arie-slob/nieuws/2020/04/07/extra-ondersteuning-voor-getroffen-lokale-en-regionale-media

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Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Additional support for affected Dutch local and regional media broadcasters, 7 April 2020

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