[PT] State takes exceptional measures for media and culture during COVID-19 crisis

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On 19 May 2020, the Council of Ministers of Portugal approved a Resolution (*Resolução do Conselho de Ministros nº 38-B/2020*) establishing an exceptional and temporary measure involving the acquisition of advertising space for the diffusion of institutional actions, within the scope of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the Council of Ministers, the current pandemic has significantly increased the state's need for institutional advertising, namely in respect of hygiene and containment measures - that citizens are expected to follow. The need for institutional communication, according to the authorities, will continue during 2020, not only to promote pandemic prevention measures but also to address social issues and to boost the restart of economic and cultural activities.

The Council of Ministers highlighted the irreplaceable role of the media in society in providing information, training and entertaining citizens and scrutinising public authorities. Based on this rationale, the state has decided to allocate EUR 15 million in advertising to legacy media through the pre-acquisition of space and/or time for the dissemination of institutional messages (75% of which will go to national media and 25% to regional and local media).

The acquisition processes concerning the EUR 15 million earmarked for institutional advertising will be managed by different ministries and state structures and agencies: the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (EUR 500 000); the Agency for Integrated Management of Rural Fires (EUR 500 000); the national tourism agency *Turismo de Portugal* (EUR 1.5 million); the Ministry of the Interior (EUR 1.5 million); the Ministry of Education and Science (EUR 500 000); the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security (EUR 1.5 million); the Directorate-General of Health (EUR 7 million); the Ministry of Environment and Energy Transition (EUR 1.5 million); and the Planning, Policy and General Administration Office (EUR 500 000).

The Resolution of the Council of Ministers of Portugal has a list (Annex 2) of media groups and companies which will benefit from the pre-payment of institutional advertising. Groups such as Media Capital (integrating the national television Channel TVI) and Impresa (integrating the national television Channel SIC) are expected to receive more than EUR 3 million each. Public media are not being

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considered for exceptional support measures during the pandemic crisis. The absence of open and published criteria for the allocation of state resources to private media has been discussed in the public sphere.

In addition to the exceptional support afforded to media groups, on 22 May 2020, Prime Minster António Costa publicly announced the creation of a special fund of EUR 30 million for cultural programming at municipality level.

The Prime Minister has stated that this financial fund will have an impact on the revival of the cultural sector, "one of the hardest hit during this crisis". António Costa recalled that festivals are not allowed during the summer, but considered that "municipalities can safely organise indoor and outdoor shows."

Municípios com 30 milhões para programação cultural que atraia turistas portugueses

https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc22/comunicacao/noticia?i=municipios-com-30-milhoes-para-programacao-cultural-que-atraia-turistas-portugueses

30 million for municipalities' cultural programming that attracts Portuguese tourists.

Resolução do Conselho de Ministros n.º 38-B/2020.

https://dre.pt/web/guest/pesquisa/-/search/134021996/details/maximized

Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 38-B / 2020.

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