[NL] New bill amending the Media Act

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On 31 August 2020, the Minister for Primary and Secondary Education and Media introduced a new bill to the Lower House of Parliament (*Tweede Kamer*), which will amend the Media Act (*Mediawet*) 2008, in order to strengthen the future of public broadcasting. The publication of the bill follows the Minister's Letter to Parliament in June 2020 on the future of public broadcasting, which set out the Dutch Government's plans for public broadcasting. The Minister also reached agreement on the proposed amendments with the public broadcasting organisation NPO (*Nederlandse Publieke Omroep*) earlier this year. A number of important amendments are detailed below.

First, in relation to advertising, from 1 January 2021, the public broadcaster NPO will stop advertising on its video-on-demand service NPO Start, as well as on its other online channels. Furthermore, NPO will no longer include advertising around children's programmes on television. Notably, the number of advertising minutes will also be gradually reduced on NPO 1, 2 and 3 over the next five years, to half the current amount. Secondy, in relation to regional broadcasting, there will be more regional news and programming with NPO *Regio* on the NPO 2 channel, and a two-hour block of regional programming every weekday. The public broadcaster's main news programme, *NOS Journaal*, will be followed by a selection of news from different regions and programmes from national broadcasters with a regional character. Moreover, more programmes from regional broadcasters will also be available via NPO Start. Thirdly, in relation to independent production, the portion of their budget which broadcasters are currently required to spend on programmes made by independent producers (*buitenproducenten*) will be lowered from 25 per cent to 16.5 per cent. In addition, sports programmes will now also count in the calculation.

Crucially, under the bill, news and current affairs programmes, and in particular investigative journalism, are explicitly added by law as a task to be performed by the public broadcaster. Finally, because more and more people are watching TV on demand rather than linear TV, the public broadcaster will now be legally obliged to provide only two linear TV channels instead of three. However, TV package providers will still be required to carry all three public TV networks as long as they exist.

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Wijziging van de Mediawet 2008 met het oog op de versterking van het toekomstperspectief van de publieke omroep, No. 35554

https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/wetsvoorstellen/detail?cfg=wetsvoorsteldetails&qry=wetsvoorstel%3A35554

Amendments to the Media Act 2008 with a view of strengthening the future of the public broadcaster, No. 35554

Kamerbrief over toekomst publieke omroep

https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/regering/bewindspersonen/arie-slob/documenten/kamerstukken/2019/06/14/kamerbrief-over-toekomst-publieke-omroep

Letter to Parliament on the future of public broadcasting

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