[NL] New funding system for local public broadcasting

IRIS 2023-2:1/12

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On 16 December 2022, the *Staatssecretaris Cultuur en Media* (State Secretary for Culture and Media) announced significant new funding for local public broadcasting, and a new system of funding for local public broadcasting. Under the scheme, the Dutch government will make over EUR 15.9 Million available to support local public broadcasters in their professionalisation, and in 2024, this funding will increase to EUR 18.9 Million. Significantly, from 2025 onwards, local broadcasters will receive funding directly from the central Dutch government, and no longer from municipalities (see IRIS 2020-6/7).

The State Secretary stated that many local public broadcasters are currently struggling financially, and most of the funding will therefore go to “strengthening the broadcasters by focusing on further professionalisation”, with EUR 9.6 Million in 2023, and EUR 11 Million in 2024. Broadcasters can use this funding, for example, to hire people or strengthen their editorial staff in other ways. Further, in 2023 and 2024, EUR 1.8 Million is also being made available for the transition to digital radio distribution (DAB+) so that broadcasters can continue to be heard when the number of analogue radio receivers decreases. Investments are also being made in more cooperation between the local and regional public broadcasters and the public broadcaster NOS.

Of further note, the State Secretary announced that the government is investing EUR 2 Million in 2023, and a further EUR 4 Million in 2024, in the Public Journalism House (*Publiek Journalistiek Huis*) partnership, which is a partnership of local, regional, and national public broadcasters. The purpose of the initiative is to create a “common space” where broadcasters jointly produce journalistic content, share innovative techniques, and conduct research into increasing impact and reach.

Finally, in 2025, a new local broadcasting system will begin. One of the important changes is that broadcasters must go through a stricter procedure in order to be designated as a local public broadcaster. These broadcasters will then receive structurally more funding. Instead of the current financing system from municipalities, the central Dutch government itself will provide funding for local public broadcasters. This will give broadcasters “long-term certainty about their financing and a more independent position in relation to municipalities”. The State Secretary stated that “it is important for the local public debate and for local democracy that people know what is going on in their village, city, or municipality.

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Local public broadcasters are indispensable in this. In the new system from 2025, they will receive more money on a structural basis, and they will no longer be dependent on municipalities for their financing."

Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, Kabinet geeft in 2023 € 15,9 miljoen aan lokale publieke omroepen, 16 december 2022

https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/ministeries/ministerie-van-onderwijs-cultuur-en-wetenschap/nieuws/2022/12/16/kabinet-geeft-in-2023-%E2%82%AC-159-miljoen-aan-lokale-publieke-omroepen

Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, In 2023, the Cabinet will give € 15.9 million to local public broadcasters, 16 December 2022

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