[DE] Radio Bremen Broadcasting Council welcomes ARD reforms and offers suggestions for the future of public broadcasting in Germany

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The *Rundrunkrat* (Broadcasting Council) of *Radio Bremen*, the smallest of the nine public service broadcasters that make up the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (German Association of Public Service Broadcasters – ARD), adopted a resolution on the further development of public service broadcasting at its meeting on 16 March 2023. Like *Saarländische Rundfunk* (Saarland broadcasting corporation), *Radio Bremen* has been the subject of numerous merger-related discussions and demands.

The *Rundfunkrat* believes it has a duty and obligation to publish a preliminary summary of its observations and conclusions as part of the debate on the future of public service broadcasting. It thinks the decision to restructure the ARD as a "content network" of radio and television channels, with a strong media and audio library, was both correct and necessary. This reorganisation process, which is already under way, means developing new things and adapting the old, keeping both in balance for a number of years and providing all licence fee payers with a compelling offering across as many of the media channels, that they use, as possible. In view of the latest technical advances and changing media consumer behaviour, such restructuring is indispensable. How and with what objectives it should be carried out must be openly discussed by the *Landesrundfunkanstalten* (state media authorities) and their supervisory boards, the *Landtage* (state parliaments), *Landesregierungen* (state governments) and interested, informed members of the public. The *Rundfunkrat* therefore hopes the so-called *Zukunftsrat* (Future Council), appointed by the *Rundfunkkommission* (Broadcasting Commission) of the *Länder,* will reach a new and viable social consensus on the remit and structure of public service broadcasting.

The *Rundfunkrat* firmly opposes any form of political interference in the setting of the licence fee and, in particular, the arbitrary freezing of the fee, reiterating that the repeated proposals that *Radio Bremen* become part of *Norddeutsche Rundfunk* (NDR) are totally inappropriate. Indeed, the ARD's regional integration in society and politics is its main source of strength.

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The *Rundfunkrat* strongly favours the creation of a common technical infrastructure within the ARD and beyond, with *Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen* (ZDF) and *Deutschlandradio*. This includes, in particular, the development of a shared platform open to the content of other public service institutions such as universities and museums.

The *Rundfunkrat* supports the ARD's plans to strengthen collaboration and cooperation between the state media authorities in relation to all media (television, radio and Internet), especially through the creation of content-related centres of expertise.

The *Rundfunkrat* also subscribes, in principle, to the current procedure for appointing broadcasting council members in accordance with the pluralism principle. It proposes finding ways of increasing the number of members with specialist knowledge in certain fields and can call on outside experts independently in accordance with Article 9(5) of the *Radio-Bremen-Gesetz* (Radio Bremen Act – RBG).

The *Rundfunkrat* urges all its members to encourage debate on the reform and future of the ARD within the relevant bodies of organisations and to invite their directors and board members to take part. These organisations represent the public, their voices must be heard in the current debate on ARD reforms, and they must play a part in the future development of public service broadcasting.

Entschließung des Rundfunkrates von Radio Bremen zur Weiterentwicklung des öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunks, 16 März 2023

https://www.radiobremen.de/ueber-uns/gremien/entschliessung-weiterentwicklung-oeffentlich-rechtlicher-rundfunk-100~download.pdf

Resolution of the Radio Bremen Broadcasting Council on the further development of public service broadcasting, 16 March 2023

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