[LV] Saeima adopts new language framework for public media content

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On 1 October 2026, the Latvian parliament, the *Saeima*, adopted amendments to the Law on Public Electronic Mass Media and Their Management (*Sabiedrisko elektronisko plašsaziņas līdzekļu un to pārvaldības likums*) at third reading. The amendments replace the current rule requiring public electronic media to produce programmes, programme segments and other services in minority languages with a framework that distinguishes between minority languages described as self-sufficient and those described as not self-sufficient. The adopted text provides for the amendments to enter into force on 1 January 2027. The Saeima describes the amendments as a response to a Constitutional Court judgment.

Under the new wording of Article 3(7), public electronic media may, subject to proportionality, produce programmes, segments and other services in minority languages that are not self-sufficient. The stated purposes are to strengthen residents' sense of belonging to Latvia, promote integration in Latvia as a nation state and deepen understanding of social and cultural processes. The provision is framed as a right, whereas the existing wording states that public media produce such content. The amending provisions do not specify which languages fall into each category.

New Article 3(7)(1) permits content in self-sufficient minority languages, again subject to proportionality, only in three circumstances: an emergency situation, a state of exception, or the need to rebut, in a targeted manner, information that is misleading, false and threatens democracy and the Latvian state as a whole. Article 3(7)(2) requires public media, when applying Article 3(7)(1), to take account of the intensity and nature of a threat to state security. The final parliamentary committee text narrowed the third exception by specifying that it concerns only such information.

The amendments also revise Article 8 on the public broadcaster's programmes and distribution. Part of the airtime of one radio and one television programme may be devoted to content in foreign languages, including minority languages, subject to the new Article 3 conditions for minority-language content. Latvian-subtitled films, series and theatrical performances may be included in that airtime. A separate addition to Article 8(3) allows foreign-language artistic expression when films, series or theatrical performances are broadcast in Latvian. The revised Article 8(4) extends its conditions to other services supplied by the

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Latvian Public Media (*Latvijas Sabiedriskais medijs*) within the public-service remit.

Strengthening the role of the Latvian language in public media

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