

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0102/08

pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure

by Cornelis Visser, Ivo Belet and Ruth Hieronymi, on behalf of the Committee on Culture and Education
to the Commission

Subject: Revision of the Broadcasting Communication - State aid for public broadcasting

According to the Competition Commissioner, Mrs Neelie Kroes, the 2001 Broadcasting Communication guarantees valuable guidance to media companies, public broadcasters and Member States. However, she considers that there may be ways it can be usefully improved in order to increase transparency and legal certainty.

In her speech to the Strasbourg broadcasting seminar (Strasbourg, 17 July 2008) Mrs Kroes defined the guidelines for the revision of the Broadcasting Communication:

- better assessment of market impact of State aid in the new media
- introducing more effective control mechanisms in the new media environment
- better definition for the public mission of broadcasters where they enter new media markets

Given that public service broadcasting plays a crucial role with regard to cultural and linguistic diversity, facilitates media pluralism, provides the public with high quality programming and in general answers cultural, social and democratic needs of society, we stress that the European Parliament must be involved in the current process of revising the Broadcasting Communication.

1. How concretely will the Commission involve Parliament in the revision of the Broadcasting Communication?
2. Is the *ex ante* assessment requirement compatible with the Commission's competences under the EU Treaty and, in particular, the Amsterdam Protocol and Community law regarding services of general interest?
3. Does *ex ante* assessment place an unnecessary administrative and financial burden on Member States and public service broadcasters?
4. Is it in the public interest to take into account the existing market offers and interests of the commercial media while defining the scope of the remit and activities of public service broadcasters?
5. What are the next steps in the revision of the Broadcasting Communication? When can Parliament expect a first draft version of the Communication?

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Forwarded: 14.10.2008

Deadline for reply: 21.10.2008