

## Recommendation 748 (1975)<sup>1</sup>

# Role and management of national broadcasting

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Considering the work of the Munich Symposium on the role and management of telecommunications in a democratic society (24-26 June 1974) ;
2. Having noted the report of its Committee on Culture and Education on this subject ([Doc. 3520](#)) ;
3. Aware of the present debates in many European countries on the management of broadcasting, and convinced that such management must preserve but can also enhance the democratic nature of European society ;
4. Recalling the Symposium in Florence in 1973 on freedom of expression and the role of the artist in European society, and in particular its [Recommendation 719 \(1973\)](#) on the exercise of freedom of artistic expression ;
5. Convinced, however, that, together with such freedom, individuals should be responsible for what they might broadcast, and also accountable before the laws and existing standards of their countries ;
6. Recalling the Symposium in Salzburg in 1968 on human rights and mass communications, and its [Resolution 428 \(1970\)](#) and [Recommendation 582 \(1970\)](#) (with [Doc. 2687](#)), and welcoming Resolution (74) 26 of the Committee of Ministers which affirmed the right of reply by individuals to radio and television ;
7. Regarding it as the duty of governments to ensure that the broadcasting media provide a full public service in the fields of 1. information, 2. culture and education, 3. debate and 4. artistic expression ;
8. Believing that this service applies to the society of a country as a whole as well as to its minorities ;
9. Holding that the state is only the trustee of the public interest, and that the interpretation of such interest must be flexible and be debated by the public itself rather than particular groups (however well intentioned), with some measure of institutionalised public control over what is broadcast ;
10. Aware of the extensive and increasing penetration of society by the broadcasting media ;
11. Stressing the importance of educating the public in the use of these media ;
12. Recalling the work being done by its parliamentary Committee on Science and Technology on the democratic control of technological development, in particular in its recent symposium on science and the decision-making machinery of society ;
13. Believing that there is room for considerably greater co-operation on a European level in broadcasting, both for the profitable exchange of ideas and expression and as a direct means of improving mutual understanding between European peoples ;
14. Aware of the difficulty of financing broadcasting networks and concerned to ensure that there be no commercial motivation in programming (planning or content),

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1. Assembly debate on 23 January 1975 (18th Sitting) (see [Doc. 3520](#), report of the Committee on Culture and Education). Text adopted by the Assembly on 23 January 1975 (19th Sitting).



15. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :
  - a. consider the "draft minimum requirements for national broadcasting" set out in the annex to this recommendation ;
  - b. invite member governments to consider holding an ad hoc conference of Ministers responsible for culture and education together with those responsible for telecommunications, in order to consider means of concerting a common European policy as regards the cultural and educational potential of broadcasting.

## Appendix ANNEX

### Draft minimum requirements for national broadcasting

1.
  - a. A full service for all the public, with :
    - Multiple choice of programming with due recognition of regional and minority interests, although not exclusively on any single channel ;*
    - A high educational and cultural element ;*
    - Control, by properly balanced programming, of cultural, commercial and also information-pollution ;*
    - High content of co-ordination and exchange with other European broadcasting productions ;*
  - b. Freedom of expression, with no governmental or institutional preliminary censorship, but subject to the following qualifications :
    - The right of reply ;*
    - Public accountability of producers for their productions before some organisation, in the first instance predominantly parliamentary, democratically representative of society ;*
    - Accountability of producers, rather than institutions, before the laws in force in any particular state ;*
  - c. The right of individual access to broadcasting in principle, though subject to the existing controls on quality and to the availability of relevant space ;
  - d. Recognition of viewers' and listeners' associations and proper opportunities for their opinions to be publicly debated ;
  - e. Instruction at all levels of education, and also via the media themselves, in the understanding of broadcasting (including advertising techniques and political propaganda) ;
  - f. Research into both the technological and social aspects of broadcasting ;
  - g. Flexibility to introduce new techniques (such as viewer-selected superimposed subtitling) ;
  - h. A special employment policy for those engaged in the media that recognises their particular responsibility towards ensuring a public service and the obligations this responsibility imposes upon them ;
  - i. The divorce of commercial interest from programme content and planning ;
  - j. Responsible control of broadcasting, whether directly by government or by the intermediary of licensed institutions.