



**HORIZONTAL FACILITY
FOR THE WESTERN
BALKANS AND TURKEY
2019-2022**

*FOR YOUR RIGHTS:
TOWARDS
EUROPEAN STANDARDS*

***Institutional and editorial independence of
public service broadcasting: topical
challenges
Radka Betcheva***

Public Service Media in transition: current challenges and ways forward

Webinar

*for the staff of the of the specialized commissions of the Parliaments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia
21 - 22 September 2020*



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PSM role and remit

- Made for the PUBLIC, financed by the PUBLIC, controlled by the PUBLIC
- Serves the interest of the public as citizens not as consumers
- Foster democratic debate
- Underpin media freedom and pluralism
- Support social cohesion
- Contribute to Europe's cultural diversity

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PSM governance – framework of rules and practices

- Legal framework
- Governing bodies
- Way the legal framework is implemented
- How actors behave within the framework
- Relationship with audiences, public authorities, civil sector

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Independence

- Securing independence is the primary role of framework of PSM governance
- Without independence PSM cannot sustain or gain credibility
- Fundamental requirement is that the editorial autonomy of PSM is guaranteed
- Independence depends on variety of legal, political and cultural factors – political and social structures, culture, interactions

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Independence II

- Regulatory and policy framework – sets out responsibilities of government, parliament, regulator, PSM, civil society
- Funding – should not be used to exert editorial influence or threaten institutional autonomy; PSM is consulted
- Clear criteria for appointments/dismissals should be defined
- Appointments/dismissals should not be used to exert political pressure on PSM

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European standards

- The role of PSM is linked to European values and fundamental freedoms
- PSM should serve as an institutional guarantee for media freedom and pluralism
- Council of Europe CM/Rec (96) 10 on “Independence of Public service media”; CoE CM/Rec N (2007)3; N (2012) 1
- EBU PSM core values – independence, universality, diversity, accountability, innovation, excellence
- EBU editorial principles – impartiality-independence; fairness-respect; accuracy-relevance; connected-accountable

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Role of Parliaments

- Adopt appropriate PSM legal frameworks
- Foster debate on Freedom of media
- Elect PSM governing bodies (Serbia, exception)
- Respect PSM institutional and editorial independence

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Key points

- Changes in PSM Laws should be based on appropriate assessment
- There should be a broad public debate including PSM
- Engagement of external expertise helps the process – CoE, EC, EBU, OSCE

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Challenges

- Understanding of PSM role and remit
- Political will, commitment
- Implementation of Law
- Public debate – proper analysis, empirical data
- Ensuring sufficient legal safeguards on PSM independence
- Harmonization with other laws – consistency
- PSM governance is not undermined by parallel or overlapping accountability mechanisms

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Challenges II

- PSM employees to be exempted from the list of civil servants
- Election and dismissal of PSM governing bodies
- Professionalisation of PSM governing bodies
- Clear separation of supervisory and executive powers
- Accountability
- Independent, stable, predictable and adequate funding
- COVID 19 impact

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Clear separation of supervisory and executive powers

- Supervisory board sets strategic priorities, controls how the remit is fulfilled and elects top management
- The management manages the day-to-day work and has ultimate responsibility for programming and management
- Council should not interfere in management
- Management should duly inform the Council

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Editorial independence

- Professional work and commitment to high journalistic standards and ethics
- Internal standards

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Thank you!

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