



OPERATING EUROVISION AND EURORADIO

**DATE**

26 October 2016

**REFERENCE**

DG/rb/sg

**SUBJECT**

Public Service Media in Romania

Mr. Klaus Werner Iohannis  
President of Romania  
Presidential Administration  
Palatul Cotroceni  
Bulevardul Geniului nr. 1-3  
Sector 6 - București 060116  
România

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing to express our deepest concern following the vote by the Romanian Parliament to abolish the licence fee for radio and television.

The licence fee model is proven in many countries to be the most stable and predictable funding method for public service media. Moreover, it is independent from political interference and establishes a direct relationship with the national audience.

The European Broadcasting Union, in combination with many international organisations, has many times voiced its concerns about the fragile state of public service media in Romania. In particular, TVR currently suffers from a highly politicised PSM governance system, with a President appointed by Parliament and routinely dismissed every year by the rejection of TVR's Annual Report.

The move to put the funding of TVR and Radio Romania entirely into the hands of the Government comes on top of a lack of structural independence that could hardly be any worse relative to EU and international standards. It will remove all semblance of an effective PSM that can contribute effectively to a cohesive and democratic society. In this way, political interference in TVR and Radio Romania affairs can be expected to reach a level almost unprecedented across the entire EBU membership.

We would like to draw your attention to the fact that such an irremediable step with respect to the funding of PSM television and radio would be notifiable to the European Commission as a new EU State aid measure. In our experience, such cases take many years to be resolved before the government may implement the new system. The only positive we could see coming out of such a delay would be the obligation for Romania, among other things, to ensure the independence of its PSM supervisory body, in line with the guidance set out in the *EU State aid Broadcasting Communication 2009*.

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We appeal to you not to endorse this proposal, making a bad situation worse, which may destroy the system of public service broadcasting (radio and tv) in Romania, to the absolute detriment of Romanian society, democracy and its citizens.

Best regards,

Ingrid Deltenre  
Director General

Copy to:

- Dacian Cioloș, The Prime Minister
- Anca Dragu, Minister of Finance
- Călin Popescu Tăriceanu, President of the Senate of Romania
- Georgică Severin, President of the Senatorial Commission for Culture and Media
- Gigel Sorinel Știrbu, President of the Chamber of Deputies Commission for Culture, Arts, Mass-Media