

## DATE

Geneva, 16 March 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of the European Broadcasting Union and its community of Members, I am writing to ask for the proposed budget for RTK in your national 2020 draft budget to be reconsidered.

We understand that the Draft Law on Budget appropriations for the Republic of Kosovo for 2020 was approved at an extraordinary session of Parliament on [15 March 2020](#). According to Art.11 p. 10 "For the period January - December 2020, eight million nine hundred sixty thousand Euros (8,960,000) shall be allocated to Radio Television of Kosovo, under the expenditure category of subsidies and transfers."

The suggested budget is approximately 2 million Euros less than the previous year, which will seriously undermine and jeopardize operations for Kosovo's national public broadcaster, whose broad and important mission in society is to inform, educate and entertain citizens, promote national language, history, culture and traditions and serve all segments of society, including children and minorities.

The role of public service media (PSM) to adhere to high professional standards and offer credible and trusted information is even more important in the current critical time of the Coronavirus outbreak, when citizens depend on reliable information, educational content and civil security announcements.

Independently of these exceptional circumstances, RTK is obliged by Law to broadcast significant cultural and sporting events, such as the Olympics and Euro 2020, which involves large-scale operations, long-term planning and financial means.

Ensuring independent, stable and adequate funding of public service media is the subject of many European instruments, in particular Recommendation 1878 (2009) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on funding of public service broadcasting requiring "adequate long-term funding" of PSM".

The EBU funding principles and other instruments also underline the importance of adequate, sustainable and independent funding.

Furthermore, we are also concerned about the requirement for quarterly reporting to the Parliament as provided in Art. 11 p. 10:

"Before each quarter, RTK will submit to the Commission for Budget and Finance at the Assembly, the program of planned expenditures. At the end of each quarter, RTK will submit to the Assembly the report on occurred expenditure. Pursuant to this paragraph, funds are appropriated and transferred by the Treasury to the account at a Commercial bank designated by RTK, according to the decision of Commission for Budget and Finance."

There is no doubt that RTK should be publicly accountable and responsible for its expenditures and we fully support this obligation. However, quarterly reporting to parliament could lead to judgmental considerations and undue political interference, which would seriously undermine the institutional independence and autonomy of the public broadcaster.

The EU is also supporting development of public service media in Kosovo as a key institution promoting democracy, dialogue, social cohesion and pluralism of opinions. Kosovo is a beneficiary of a significant EU-funded project for Technical assistance to PSM in the Western Balkans implemented by a consortium comprising the EBU, International Federation of Journalists, European Federation of Journalists, ORF, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) and the EBU Regional News Exchange office (ERNO). Stakeholders in the project are representatives of parliaments, regulatory authorities, PSM governing and management bodies, civil sector representatives and experts from the six Western Balkan countries aiming at EU membership. The stakeholders have adopted two sets of Regional Common Principles on PSM Funding and Governance, which are attached to this letter. For your information, the Regional Common Principles on PSM Funding and Governance are included in the EU Declarations and Recommendations in the negotiation process for Montenegro.

The EBU will further provide professional assistance to the public broadcaster and support its endeavors to best serve the people.

I sincerely hope that you will engage in a dialogue with the relevant authorities to reconsider the budget and the reporting to the parliament and enable RTK as an important democratic institution to fulfill its remit in society.

Most respectfully,



Noel Curran  
Director General

Annex: Common PSM funding principals adopted in Sarajevo 28.05.2019  
Common principles on PSM Governance in the Western Balkans