



11TH SOUTH CAUCASUS MEDIA CONFERENCE

Public Service Broadcasting in the Digital Age

10-11 November 2014, Tbilisi, Georgia

RECOMMENDATIONS

This document summarizes recommendations that were identified during the discussion of more than 70 journalists, representatives of government, civil society and academia from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, along with international experts and participants from Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Kazakhstan at the 11th annual South Caucasus Media Conference, organized by the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media on 10-11 November 2014 in Tbilisi, Georgia.

The conference focused on discussing values, content, financing, management, regulation and governance of public service broadcasting in the context of new media technologies.

The conference participants agreed that:

- Public service broadcasters should serve citizens, not government or political forces or commercial or other interests.
- Public service broadcasters' activities should always be guided by principles of accuracy, objectivity, balance, accountability and editorial independence.
- Public service broadcasters should do their best to be the most relevant and trusted source of information across all media platforms.
- Public service broadcasters should distribute their programmes via all possible means of communication and networks (satellite, Internet, cable and terrestrial) to ensure wide outreach.
- Public service broadcasters should regard the convergence of all broadcasting platforms into digital as a new opportunity to strengthen media pluralism.
- Governments should include provisions in legislation and regulations to facilitate public service broadcasters' digital switchover.
- The Internet and other platforms should not only provide access to traditional programming of public service broadcasters, but also operate as new content services in their own right.

- The Internet and social media should be used by public service broadcasters to get feedback and to engage in debates and dialogue with the audience.
- Public service broadcasters should aim to measure the needs and satisfaction of their audience, paying attention to all parts of society.
- Public service broadcasters should give high importance to self-produced and local content, as well as to the diversity of programmes for all social groups to reflect the cultural, religious and language diversities of its audience.
- In multi-ethnic and multi-language countries, programmes should be produced in several languages and public service broadcasters should have a multi-ethnic employment policy.
- Special programmes for online distribution should be made to attract and involve younger audience into the realm of public service broadcasting.
- The financing of public service broadcasters should be sufficient, guaranteed, transparent and predictable in the medium term, and allow independence from both political and commercial interests and pressure.
- In view of increased competition in the audiovisual media, public service broadcasters should look into new technologies that would ensure wider public outreach.
- The process of appointing or election of members of public service broadcasters' boards and regulatory bodies should be transparent and reflect a broad spectrum of society.
- The integrity of editorial and operational decision making of public service broadcasters should be properly protected.
- All public service broadcasters' documents, policy papers, decisions and recommendations should be available online for public oversight. A system of interaction with the public should be in place. It should include an effective self-regulatory mechanism, including an ombudsman or similar institution within the structure of the broadcaster, which has the possibility to receive complaints, provide corrections and suggestions, and seek redress in conflict situations.