



# PSB Newsletter

July-August 2012

## Is the era of State monopoly on national television broadcasting really over?

State run television channels that have for decades supported the propaganda of authoritarian regimes are at long last speaking a different language. They declare that they are about to mutate into public service broadcasters. Members of the PSB network who attended a number of conferences in the region witnessed these new prospects. Change has become inevitable. It remains to be seen how this can happen, within what timespan, according to what roadmap and with what support.

The mantra repeated since the fall of the Ben Ali regime that "State televisions must be turned into public service broadcasting" must face up to numerous challenges if it is to be more than a slogan.

We do from now on subscribe to the concept of a responsibility to monitor and to observe our public media. Civil society has a role to play in the observation and a duty to call upon media decision makers in the name of accountability. We are at the forefront of advocacy for quality public service broadcasting for all. Shall we respond to the challenge?

This newsletter will highlight the major events in the region with regard to PSB as well as the issues at stakes and the challenges to overcome.

We foresee an agenda of events around the publication of the eight national studies that

provide an analysis of the national broadcasters and the extent of their commitment to the mission of public service broadcasting in the region and the publication of a regional synthesis that focuses on the notion of public service broadcasting in the Arab countries. This will provide numerous opportunities in each of the eight countries to speak up for the emergence of strong and independent public service broadcasting. It is planned to organize many events in this regard.

These requirements are more than a wish list. The conclusions and recommendations included in the present newsletter contain specific solutions and a roadmap that is directed to all those who have a say in the emergence of a mission of PSB.

The set up of a PSB channel requires changes on many levels including the internal management of television channels, the creation of an independent monitoring mechanism and the establishment of modes of funding that ensure political independence.

It is relevant to recall at this point that the PSB network has always been careful not to impose a Western vision of a specific media model.

Right from the start of the project the network has agreed on the notion of an ideal of PSB that corresponds to universal values that need to evolve empirically as new questions and issues emerge.

An embryo of public service broadcasting exists in each country and our endeavor is to foster its growth towards full development.

Public service broadcasting is an ideal that no television channel has fully achieved but it remains a goal worth aiming for.

*Latifa Tayah-Guéneau, Institut Panos Paris*

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**Have collaborated on this edition:**  
Rasha Abdulla, Khaled Abu Aker, Amjad Baiazy, Larbi Chouikha, Marius Dragomir, Saïd Essoulami, Roland Huguenin Benjamin, Abdelmoumène Khelil, Tony Mikhael, Magalie Namhee, Sylvaine Petit, Latifa Tayah-Guéneau.

**Thanks to all of them!**

## Fostering the development of established media outlets? Is the effort worth it?

### Feedback from one year of conferences on arab media

At the heart of the popular uprising in the Arab countries the issue of the media is permanently being raised in debates and conferences and one can witness surges of solidarity aiming at the reinforcement of the media along with the process of transition towards democracy.

The diversity and the complexity of the Arab media outlets are constantly being examined and analyzed, from the protesting blogger and the social networks up to the editorial line of al Jazeera and via the national broadcasters.

Unexpectedly a renewal of interest for the role of the State broadcasters focuses on the call for their transformation. The dictators gone, it is a priority to turn these tools of propaganda into independent media in the service of all citizens and responding to quality requirements that are above and beyond political affiliations.

Numerous events have provided us with opportunities to include the issue of PSB in the agenda. The PSB network has established its credentials and its credibility as a legitimate representative of civil society and many members of the group have received invitations to attend these meetings (for instance the COPEAM conference in March 2012, the world conference of press freedom held in Tunis in May 2012 etc.) What were the findings and the lessons learnt?

We are witnessing the emergence of voices calling for PSB in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa. All insist on the need to develop public service television channels whilst ensuring that established media outlets are there to stay. Are these voices merely keeping up with current trends or do they represent real readiness to accept change?

From interviews conducted with stakeholders during recent conferences one can infer that there is a search for consensus. Whatever countries they come from, be it countries that have actually covered some ground in the field of PSB or countries where the concept is still new and largely unknown to the public, they

agree on a common vision for an ideal of PSB that should be at the service of all segments of the population, transcend private interests, operate to the benefit of society and represent political pluralism and diversity.

Their vision corroborates the one that presided at the onset of the PSB network: Our project was born out of a concern to enhance the mission of public service broadcasting. This mission is essential to the democratic process because it provides all citizens with quality independent information that represent the diversity of society, the plurality of opinion trends and thereby contribute to foster the emergence of an informed audience and to ensure national cohesion.

***"All insist on the need to develop public service television channels whilst ensuring that established media outlets are there to stay".***

As to the practicalities needed to introduce these reforms opinions concur and foresee that media operators will have to develop new methods of internal management, transparent policies for call for tenders, recruitment criteria that correspond to actual needs, programming in keeping with adequate books of specifications. It is the responsibility of the lawmakers to adopt a legal framework that will lead to the creation of an independent mechanism of media regulation and the duty of the media professionals to operate within the mandate of self-regulation.

The recent meetings have yielded a long list of requirements and they all require due attention.

First of all the debates were mostly conducted without the participation of representatives of the public. Yet the deployment of a mission of PSB should be a tremendous opportunity for each State to conduct public polls and to ensure that PSB becomes part of a global strategy to inform, to educate and to entertain in a manner that responds to the needs but also to the capacity of the audience to absorb the flow of information. To fail to consult with the public is likely to cause a loss of audience right from the start.

Over and beyond the stated ambitions one can wonder what is happening with the real operational implementation and what roadmaps have actually been put forward.

It is our call, friends and members of the PSB network, to observe and to question the measures taken to implement the speeches made about PSB. The INRIC report in Tunisia contains precise indications that should facilitate the implementation of the PSB, yet political decisions have not been taken in time. The latest book of specifications for public broadcasting in Morocco has been perceived as a step backwards with regard to the mission of PSB. In Egypt the project of an electoral debate before the second round of the presidential elections in Egypt has been cancelled.

All in all it is easy to hold idealistic views about the PSB, it is quite another matter to adopt a pragmatic approach that takes into account the local specificities in each country and the expectations of the public. Suffice it to say for example that there is no panacea to organise the funding of the PSB. Each country must develop its own system to raise funds in keeping with local constraints and uses.

The same goes for the elaboration of any mechanism related to the PSB, there is no showcase for the ideal system of independent media regulation. The implementation of a system of PSB cannot be imposed from the outside, it will only succeed if it is the outcome of the local efforts in each country who can still benefit from earlier experiences made in African as well as in Western and in Eastern European countries.

***Latifa Tayah-Guéneau, IPP.***



# News



**Marius Dragomir**, Senior manager Media Program - Open Society Foundations

## Istanbul conference : media time for digital

The project, "Mapping Digital Media," is implemented by Open Society Foundations and its network of experts, on the impact of digitization on democracy in 60 countries around the world.

### Interview with Marius Dragomir

**You have now released 24 national reports aiming at mapping digital media.**

**You have also published several analysis and papers on this issue. You are now going to share your conclusions in Istanbul (July 10/11th) during your "Mapping digital media advocacy Summit". What are you expecting from this meeting?**

**Marius:** This meeting is aimed at sharing the preliminary conclusions of this study with researchers from all the 60 countries, but also with partner organizations in all these places who are expected to use these reports and their recommendations in future follow-up work. At the same time, the event in Istanbul is expected to be a forum of discussions and brainstorming with the goal of strategizing on future follow-up and advocacy work. We expect this event to help us, our partners and researchers design action plans in the policy areas at national, regional and international levels.

**Within the PSB project we are also aware on how governments are taking advantage of the Digital to implement and strengthen the public service broadcasting. How, your network and our network can combine our efforts and the main results of our studies for the advocacy work directed to the governments?**

**Marius:** The presence of Panos Paris Institute and other research and advocacy organizations that do similar work in Istanbul is expected to bolster networks of researchers, activists, policy makers and journalists to take this research to the next level where it can influence media policy for the better in as many of these countries as possible.

**AS PARTNERS OF OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS, WE WILL ATTEND THE CONFERENCE**

**Egypt's Public Service Broadcasting researcher, Dr. Rasha Abdulla, associate professor and former chair of the Journalism and Mass Communication Department at the American University in Cairo will be participating at the OSF Istanbul Summit. Dr. Abdulla is the Mapping Digital Media researcher for Egypt, and will be chairing a session at the summit on "public service in the media and public information space."**

Charles Autheman from Panos Paris Institute, Dima Dabbous-Sensenig, associate expert of the PBS Network, Roula Mikhael, from Maharat Foundation will also attend the meeting.

### The 8 national Studies on "Public Broadcast Assessment" are released.

It is now time for the advocacy work.

Focus on Maharat work in Lebanon: Maharat will work at 3 levels: dissemination, sensitization, advocacy, With Regard to the Administrative reform and related to the Programming reform.



The LADDH monitoring Team

### Recommendations from the LADDH:

- ▶ *The need to reinforce the legal framework that regulates journalistic practice with a view to secure more liberty and responsibility and in particular to guarantee the right of access to the sources of information*
- ▶ *The need to open up audio-visual broadcasting to the private sector and to safeguard and promote the regulations that guarantee the mission of public service broadcasting*
- ▶ *The need to build up the capacities of journalists via full-fledged training on all levels.*
- ▶ *L'ouverture de l'audiovisuel au secteur privé avec la préservation et la promotion des réales du service public.*

## Algeria, Media Monitoring during the legislative elections of May 10th : statements and recommendations

**As it had done during the presidential elections in 2009 the LADDH has repeated its monitoring of the media during the electoral campaign. This time it focused on the monitoring of the media coverage of the electoral campaign leading up to the legislative elections of May 10th 2012.**

The outcome of this monitoring demonstrates that the media in general have not respected the norms of impartiality, objectivity and diversity in their coverage of the activities of the political actors and of the overall electoral process. We could conclude to the total lack of electoral education in the content of the observed media, in particular with regard to the programmes of the national television ENTV. It has limited its output to encouraging citizens to vote but without providing any pedagogical support such as explanations about the role of the members of Parliament, the modalities of the election process, the rights of the voters, etc.

We could also observe the fact that the audio-visual media, and to a lesser extent the written press, made a blackout on the politicians who called upon people to abstain from voting and to boycott the elections.

In addition the space allocated to women politicians (candidates and electors) has remained insignificant with comparison to male politicians. (Less than 6%)

**Abdelmoumène Khelil, LADDH, Algeria.**



Abdelmoumène Khelil, from the LADDH

At the end of the elections of May 10th 2012 the Minister of communication announced publicly that a draft law on audio-visual broadcast, opening up to privatisation was currently being elaborated. The Minister said: "Workshops will be held for the professional associations, the film makers and representatives of civil society so that they can comment and make suggestions on the draft law within a large national commission aiming at achieving a large national consensus". This process might turn out to be worth its while if it is accompanied by a real political will to take the recommendations of civil society into consideration and to place the notion of PSB at the heart of the media reform.

## Egypt, The failure of the Public service broadcasting in the coverage of the presidential elections

"It's been interesting to watch how the media covered the Presidential elections, and it was very clear that public service broadcasting in the sense that we are trying to promote is basically non-existent. The state-owned media are not trying to serve the public, but rather they serve those in power or whoever they believe those in power are supporting at the moment. During the second and final round of elections, there was supposed to be a public debate televised on air on the state-owned media. After promoting it for days, the candidates refused to face each other, so it was announced that the "debate" would be in the form of two identical interviews with the nominees. After advertising that for days, it was suddenly cancelled with no explanation or apologies given. That was just that. The issues that should be of interest to the public in terms of the nominees' programs and plans for the country were almost never tackled.

"It will be interesting to watch how the new President will act towards the public media, especially that he (and the Muslim Brotherhood) has little experience in this regards. It could be a good chance for the Egyptian civic society to put the pressure on for some real changes and some actual reform. The problem is all sectors of the society have to be represented in the media and in any regulatory bodies that may be set in place. We have to make sure diversity of opinion is promoted. Inclusion will be key during this coming period."

**Rasha Abdulla, Cairo**



Rasha Abdulla

## Palestine, News from the PBC

Le President Mahmoud Abbas issued a decree that Appointed Mr.Riyad Al Hasan, the President of the Palestinian News & Information Agency, as the chairman of the board of the PBC. According to the decree he should present his candidates for the board within a month. We are expecting a President decreethis month with a list of the board of trustees.

A new administrative council was created for the PBC that consists of the heads of divisions, after taking in to account our recommendations in the study that the administrative council should consist of the people from the PBC and not from outside the way it use to be in the past. The new council had its first meeting last week.

Ahmad Hazouri, the director general of Palestine TV is the head of this board.

The PBC became recently a full member in the Asian Broadcasting Union (ABU).

**Khaled Abu Aker, AMIN, Palestine**

## Morocco, The war for books of specifications will not take place !

The controversy generated by the new books of specifications for public television divided the public opinion. Supporters of Arab-Islamic specificity led by the Justice and Development Party (PJD) and a part of the civil society are opposed to those who want to protect linguistic pluralism and cultural openness to the world mobilizing both the opposition parties and government members and the media and associations. The former accuse the latter of being a lobby of "French-speaking" which aims at maintaining the privileges of a minority and the latter accusing the former of wanting to Islamize public service broadcasting.

The books of specifications envisage that 80% of Al Oula's emissions should be in Arabic and 50% of programs in Arabic for 2M, 30% in Amazigh, 20% in foreign-language and that the French TV news should be scheduled from 20:45 to one hour later. The volume of religious programs would be increased by 52 minutes per week. All in all, we would have about 70% for Arabic, 20% for Tamazight and 10% for foreign languages.

According to the newspaper Liberation, the King spoke in order to end the controversy by saying to the head of government: "I want televisions and radios that unite and not divide." To answer to this summons, an Interministerial Commission was created with the mission to rearrange the books of specifications. According to the Moroccan press, the Commission must reassess among other things: respect for multilingualism, in particular the place of the French language; the advertising of the lottery; independence of the channels regarding political power, and the religious aspect, especially the broadcasting on 2M of the five daily calls to prayer.

**Saïd Essoulami, CMF Mena, Morocco**



Khaled Abu Aker

## Syria, Information war



Amjad Baiazy

The Arab Spring used social media extensively, amid a global culture of online activism that has made the world realize the power of the internet. Bloggers and activists have been the main engine for organizing protests, lobbying on behalf of prisoners, and reporting news to the outside world. The revolts have used two main weapons: the relentless determination of protesters and social media outlets. For example, if we examine trends in social media we can see that Syria has had unprecedented presence on social media websites since March 2011.

Cyberspace has been the main battlefield between the Syrian government and dissidents. The internet created bridges between dissidents, and it was the most credible means for communications as phones were monitored. An activist from a town in Daraa told me, "I never used the Internet before the revolt, but as the revolt started I felt obliged to tell the world what was going on in my town. So in a few weeks I became a reporter for many TV channels. I used Skype and satellite phones to communicate with TV channels, and I used social media to spread news to the entire world. Then I started training others and now we are a group of 25 media activists in my town."

The Syrian government has used people from different backgrounds to promote the government's agenda. The Syrian state TV director was replaced with Reem Haddad, a staunch supporter of the regime who claimed that 4,000 Syrians who fled to Turkey had gone to visit their families. The editor-in-chief of the Tishreen state daily journal was sacked because she said that "those who shot civilians in protests should be brought to justice." Addounia TV hired actors to portray political analysts, protesters, ordinary citizens, and others in support of the Syrian government.

In contrast to the Mubarak government in Egypt, which tried to quash dissent by shutting down the country's entire internet, the Syrian government took a strategic approach to disrupt protests on social media, turning off electricity, internet and telephone service in neighbourhoods with the most unrest and then turning them back on if the same neighbourhoods stopped protesting against the regime for few days, activists say. With foreign journalists barred from the country, dissidents have worked with exiles using Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter to draw global attention to the brutal military crackdown.

To read more, please consult the report of Amjad Baiazy:

<http://www.mediapolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/Syria-Cyber-Wars-06-01-2012-proof2.pdf>

*Amjad Baiazy*



## Tunisia, The scuttling of INRIC: the end of hope for media pluralism?

**Interview with Larbi Chouikha, member of the National Independent Committee for Media and Communication Reform and member of the PSB Network.**

**What are the motives behind your decision to terminate the activities of the INRIC?**

Let us recall that the INRIC is a temporary consultative body set up by a decree in March 2011 that defined its main roles, namely to submit propositions to the Government with a view to improve the audio-visual media scene, to contribute to the elaboration of a legal and institutional framework for the media in accordance with international standards implemented in democratic countries, to foster the emergence of a new media culture based on the principles of plurality and diversity of the media and affirming the right to access to information and the liberty of expression.

We are in charge of drafting an exhaustive report including an assessment of the situation

and then recommendations to ensure the development of the media environment. Yet since the elections of October 23rd 2011 we have frequently had to come up to terms with the fact that the new Government was not willing to enter into cooperation with the INRIC in order to launch reforms. It has to be said that the executive power has not done anything to start implementing the decree relative to the press, printing and publishing (number 115 of November 2nd 2011) and the decree that foresaw the creation of an independent institution for audio-visual broadcast (number 116 of November 2nd 2011). As a consequence to this day the entire Tunisian media set up operates without a legal and institutional framework. This paves the way to all kinds of misuse and breaches.

**What happened since the INRIC published its report?**

The report is the first assessment of its kind in Tunisia that includes a full-fledged evaluation of the media since the accession of ex-President Ben Ali to power until January 14th 2011 as well as a list of recommendations aiming at reforming the media set up in the country, it was our keenest wish that a national debate including all the main public stakeholders, in addition to the Government would be launched to discuss the necessary reforms. Yet we found out that there was no political will at all to get the process started and that in addition the Government was making decisions, such as appointing people to positions in the public media outlets without any prior consultation with the INRIC and in contradiction with the substance of the two decrees mentioned above.

**What can we expect from the present Government in terms of reform of the media set up?**

The reform of the media set up is not exclusively the concern of the Government. We have kept repeating during the latest press conference (July 4th 2012) that all components of civil society, the political organisations and the members of the ANC all need to be involved. It is obvious that in all the countries that are initiating a political transition that claims to be democratic, the powers that be, mainly those who do not command a sufficient background of experience and culture inspired by the fundamentals principles of democracy, tend to repeat the old patterns and to use the same methods and practice that were in use under the authoritarian regime. As a consequence it is up to civil society to mobilize and to put pressure on the rulers to ensure that reforms actually get implemented.

*Larbi Chouikha*

# Press Review

## Algeria

### Training to the benefit of the journalists

El Moudjahid 03/07/2012

Training courses for the journalists might begin in the last term of the year 2012, according to an announcement made in Algiers by the Minister of Communication, M Nacer Mehal. The Government had "decided with the financial law of 2012, and this for the first time, to sponsor the training of journalists to an amount of 400 millions DA.

In answer to a question related to the law on public broadcasting M Mehal has stated that: "the workshops organised to discuss this issue were open to media professionals and to civil society". This law will "confirm the objectives stated in the fundamental law with respect to information".

Article 59 of the said law states that "audio-visual broadcasting is a mission of public service". Articles 63, 65 and 66 foresee the creation of a regulation authority for audio-visual broadcasting.

## Syria

### Media power and the Syrian revolution paradox

By Omar Abdulati, in Doha Centre for Media Freedom 05/04/2012

In Syria, all institutions suffer a crippling weakness and the press is no exception. This is clear from the confused manner by which media dealt with the outbreak of protests which first started in the locality of Dara.

(...) Syrian media is working under tight state control, especially at times of economic or foreign policy crisis. But the question now is, what is it like for members of the media to cover a crisis of a prime security order which is hitting a police state?

As expected, the regime came up with a security plan to address the political unrest instead of a social and economic approach to ease the tension. According to the plan, the media is a key propaganda tool that justifies and legitimises the security clampdown to be undertaken.

(...)

**State media on the offensive**

Official media was forced to go on the offensive when the security solution failed and the legendary popular resistance proved to be unbreakable. It was also outsmarted by the media performance of anti-regime activists.

#### The propaganda

In its coverage of the revolution, the Syrian media in its print, broadcast and online forms was remarkable in its extremist call for the army to crackdown on the protests. Private media outlets in particular were responsible for organizing defamation campaigns targeting number of Arab personalities and states, and accusing them of conspiring against Syria. They carried out these campaigns on behalf of official media which could not do them because they spoke for the regime and reflected its policies.

(...)

#### News, by any means possible

In spite of these appalling conditions, activists were able to find their way through thanks to the potential that modern telecommunication technology put at their disposal. Activists filled in the vacuum left by the absence of professional journalists, challenging the regime with thousands of reporters and eyewitnesses who came into being overnight (...)

It only makes sense that the regime in Syria has lost media war because it deals with the 21st century with a mindset suitable to the eighties of the previous century.

Article available on the Doha Centre for Media Freedom web site:

<http://www.dc4mf.org/en/content/media-power-and-syrian-revolution-paradox-0>

## Palestine

### Report of the special rapporteur on the promotion and the to freedom of opinion and expression in Palestine occupied territories and Israel - 11/06/2012

Frank La Rue, the Special Rapporteur was informed that initiatives have been taken to promote cultural diversity in Palestinian broadcasting Corporation and provide airtime for private and independent programmes, including satirical programmes. In particular, he is pleased to note that PBC is willing to provide the space for all individuals to express their opinions regardless of their political affiliation.

- The Special Rapporteur is cognizant of the difficulties and challenges faced by PBC

in transforming into an independent and autonomous body, including the political climate, paralysis of the Palestinian Legislative Council, and resistance from within PBC and from certain sectors of society who deem certain programmes to be contrary to cultural values and traditions. While many of the initiatives have yet to be implemented, including the establishment and appointment of the Board of Trustees, the Special Rapporteur welcomes the gradual transformation of PBC and looks forward to receiving information on the progress of reform. He also hopes that the availability of independent and satirical programmes will create a culture of openness and tolerance towards criticism.

Read the article on line:

<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G12/138/95/PDF/G1213895.pdf?OpenElement>

## Jordan

### State media development 'bound by gov't policy, lack of resources'

Zawya, 03/07/2012

State media representatives on Monday said the performance of the official press was determined largely by government policies and budgetary considerations.

Blaming the media in general for creating tension and accusing several independent outlets of harbouring private agendas, the King said in an interview with Jordan Television (JTV) on Sunday that the official media "have regrettably failed to deal with the current stage and the exceptional conditions in the region with the required level of professionalism and ability to influence public opinion".

(...)

"JTV has started to change its policies by giving more attention to remote areas. Our teams have started reaching out to underprivileged communities in order to keep them updated," Rawashdeh said, adding that this will help deliver the government's message outside the capital.

He blamed the poor image of the official media on private outlets competing with them "at the expense of quality and professionalism".

Read the article on line:

[http://www.zawya.com/story/State\\_media\\_devlopment\\_bound\\_by\\_govt\\_policy\\_lack\\_of\\_resources-ZAWYA20120703050826/](http://www.zawya.com/story/State_media_devlopment_bound_by_govt_policy_lack_of_resources-ZAWYA20120703050826/)

Press review by Sylvaine Petit, IPP



# Public service broadcasting in the Mena region - Potential for reform

THE REGIONAL PUBLICATION

## Synthesis of the national studies

The first findings of an extensive process of evaluation stand out clearly: the call for a mission of public service broadcasting (PSB) is unanimously supported.

Over 300 people in eight Arab countries targeted by the research have responded to interviews and contributed to consultations, each in his/her relevant capacity as a media operator, regulator, journalist or representative of a civil society organisation.

They all agree that the proliferation of private and independent satellite television channels and the concomitant multiplication of sources of information can in no way be a substitute for the mission of public broadcasting of national television channels. It is part of the State's responsibility to deliver a mission of public service broadcasting for which it is accountable to its citizens.

In this regard the first lesson that can be drawn from the research conducted has to do with the very notion of public service broadcasting. Even though television viewers and media professionals may only have a rather vague grasp of the concept itself, some of them – including the less experienced - have in general come up with characteristics and definitions that point to a universal ideal. The large array of expectations expressed by contributors to the

study converge towards the commonly agreed definition. This serves to demonstrate that cultural, religious and geographical specificities do not have any major bearing on the universally agreed notion of the mission of public service broadcasting (PSB).

The supply of information is an essential service that the State must guarantee without interfering with the actual modalities of its production.

It is therefore necessary to give due consideration to the conditions that must be met for mission of Public service broadcasting to become a reality.

The present research sought to assess the extent to which a mission of public service is actually being delivered. Some of the elements of responses collected provide ground for optimism.

At some points across the region one can see the embryos that could develop into a mission of public service broadcasting. Morocco is even ahead of this stage and has laid the foundations that will lead to a full-fledged mission of PSB. Moroccan broadcasting legislation, for instance, clearly states the obligations of the media operators in terms of accountability and transparency and defines precise requirements in

books of specifications. In spite of the fact that legislations remain inadequate in Egypt, Algeria, Jordan and Lebanon, programmes about issues of general social concern (health, handicaps, sports) are broadcast and that these issues are sometimes debated on air.



Most interviewees in Palestine welcomed recent developments on their national channel. Tunisia is planning to establish an independent regulatory authority and this is a positive signal. Yet in spite of the ongoing trend towards reform it is obvious that one can not anticipate the outcome of the present negotiations about the governance of the national television channel

(set up of the board of directors, appointment of the management).

Even these positive examples are a reminder that one should remain cautious and not indulge into premature conclusions. These examples are in no way sufficient to hide the fact that the mission of PSB remains largely indistinct and that the actual programs of national television channels are mostly inadequate and do not stand up to the requirements of a mission of public service.

This first inventory shows that the existing legal frameworks remain insufficient and that the definition of PSB is vague, or even inexistent. In most countries there is no legislation to ensure that a real mission of PSB will be delivered. Public companies established to manage radio and television broadcast have strong links to the ruling regime and in many cases are utterly dependent on it.

In the course of the study it became evident that many elements of information related to the governance and the management of these channels were not readily available. This goes a long way to show the lack of transparency in the management of the channels, the awarding of contracts, the recruitment and compensation procedures and the selection of tenders.

Even though media regulation actually stands for the right of the public to have access to cross-checked and objective information and for the right of the media professionals to liberty of the press, practically none of the countries has an independent mechanism of media regulation. The few attempts by some countries in the region to regulate the media are a positive development but they still lack some or many of the mechanisms that should serve to guarantee real independence. An examination of the performance of the few existing regulators also showed that their decision making process and their accounting should become more transparent.

It has also proven difficult to obtain relevant information about the strategic plans made in view of the transfer to digital broadcasting and its impact on the future of PSB.

The quality of the programs broadcast by the national channels analyzed in this project is by and large rather weak. In Syria and in Algeria the national channels are actually losing audience because people consider them to be instruments of the ruling authorities that are in full control of the audiovisual broadcast: Yet expectations run high in Algeria as reforms have been announced. Morocco has the most sophisticated legislation but this is in itself not enough unless adequate manpower and financial means are made available to deliver a mission of PSB.

It is a real challenge to conduct an objective and detailed analysis of the content of television programs to assess the extent to which they satisfy the requirements of public service broadcasting. A program may in appearance be dealing with issues of general interest, provide opportunities for interaction with the public and generally correspond to the concept of PBS. Yet an in-depth analysis of the extent to which this program handles the issue in an exhaustive and neutral manner and reaches out to the largest audience possible is required to see if a program meets the PBS criteria.

***« It is therefore necessary to give due consideration to the conditions that must be met for mission of Public service broadcasting to become a reality».***

The analysis of information magazines and talk shows has demonstrated that a televised debate featuring multiple guests is not necessarily an opportunity for a free exchange of views where all aspects of an issue can be debated. The studio debate is too frequently used to create the impression that opposed views are being expressed and that a debate is taking place.

It is important to clarify that the purpose of this research was not to pass judgment upon programs but rather to compile information in order to examine them impartially. We have therefore observed numerous aspects and dimensions of the PSB with a view to highlight shortcomings and potential improvements. How can these findings then be put to good use with a view to go beyond the mere analysis of the mission of PSB today?

These findings are meant to serve as the launching pad for lobbying, information and awareness raising activities about the PSB in the hope that it would help foster reform in the countries under review in this study.

Alongside this regional report, eight country reports provide individual recommendations that are meant to improve the status of PSB in each country. These recommendations will be submitted to all the public operators, to the relevant Ministries and to the regulation authorities wherever they exist

**This first balance sheet is meant to provide a reference against which future developments will then be measured.**

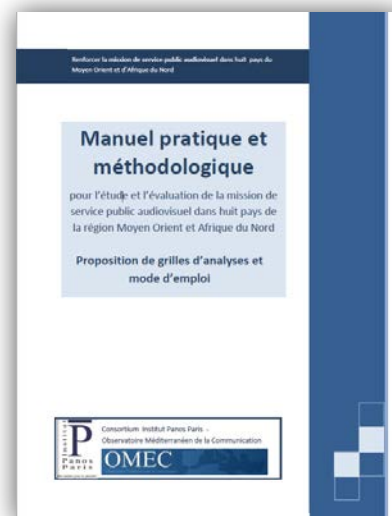
The analysis process was launched before the revolutions of 2011 in the Arab world. Facts related to PSB have not yet changed drastically and therefore the information provided here remains up to date. It will then be possible to benchmark progress made and to compare the phases of development in the coming years.

The road leading to a mission of PSB will be a long one as the list of recommendations attached shows. The history of PSB is nearly one century old in Europe and yet it is still being vividly debated amongst the public.



These recommendations have already been discussed with media professionals from all the countries targeted by the study. In December 2011 a conference convened in Amman brought together seventy journalists, trade unionists, managers, representatives of regulatory authorities under the auspices of the Jordanian Ministry of Information to initiate an exchange of views. In Palestine discussions have been ongoing with the general management of the national Palestine Television prior to the Amman conference and during a workshop held in Ramallah in January 2012.

This feedback from the field encourages all participants to keep up with the regular monitoring of the national public broadcasters and to hold them accountable to their duty to deliver quality information for all. Turning national broadcasters into public service broadcasters is a tall order but one that will serve to foster real change in the Arab media environment.



## Recommendations for the enhancement of the mission of public service broadcasting (PSB) in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa

The main objective of the research that underlies the present report is to contribute to the enhancement of the mission of public service broadcasting in the Middle East and North Africa region. This endeavour aims at proposing a roadmap to support the media professionals in their efforts to boost the capacity of national television channels to deliver a mission of public service for the benefit of all citizens.



*Recommandations issues de la conférence de Amman et des études nationales*

It goes without saying that public service broadcasting should operate independently and be free from interference and from any form of control and censorship by the ministries of information. The Ministries of information should ultimately be replaced by independent monitoring and regulating bodies.

Whereas the Government should refrain from controlling the operation of the public broadcaster, there should be clear rules to regulate the ownership of commercial television stations with a view to prevent conflict of interests and any monopoly of media ownership.

The following recommendations comprise of a vast array of approaches that serve to guarantee access to information for all. The list is not exhaustive and will need to be updated regularly according to need because the recommendations target the eight countries under review from a variety of angles:

1. The legal framework that regulate audiovisual broadcast;
2. Issues of transparency, good governance and accountability;
3. The programming of public broadcasters;
4. The training of journalists and their awareness to the concept of PSB;
5. The role of civil society organizations.

## Legal frameworks to guarantee the mission of public service broadcasting

In order to set up an environment that guarantees the independence and the pluralism of the media, the State should give up its monopoly and its control of the media. This also means that it will be necessary to develop adequate legal provisions to safeguard the liberty of expression, the freedom of the press and the right of access to information.

It is therefore necessary to draft a new media legislation with a view:

- to guarantee the right of citizens to information and communication within the framework of the liberty of expression and to prevent obstruction to the liberty of the press;
- to reckon with the relevance of the role of television broadcast for social development;
- to define the legal framework that regulates the administrative management of the national broadcasters;
- to define the obligations of the public service broadcaster and the rules in case of breach of the said obligations;
- to set up adequate recruitment and appointment procedures for the top management of public broadcasters by an independent and collegial body operating in full transparency and independence;
- to define the rules of competition between audiovisual broadcasters;
- to establish a transparent model of funding, both on the level of collecting license fees and on the level of managing the budget of public broadcasters;
- to allow for the import of international audiovisual products whilst protecting the national audiovisual production;
- to set up mechanisms to ensure the protection of children, teenagers and other vulnerable categories of audience.

The operation of the media environment is conditional upon the existence of independent mechanisms that guarantee their independence as well as the respect of the fundamental rules of ethics of journalism. It is therefore necessary that Governments give up their control of the media and those independent regulatory mechanisms be set up with the following tasks:

- to ensure that media broadcasters operate within respect of the law;
- to develop rules and procedures for the regulation of broadcast content;
- to define and to implement clear and transparent procedures for the attribution of frequencies and broadcast licenses to media operators;
- to supervise the proper implementation of the PSB, the compliance with the book of specifications, by public operators;
- to monitor the output of the national broadcaster in order to ensure that it is not manipulated or used by any Government authority;
- to monitor the objectivity and the respect of balance and pluralism in the way information is being handled;
- to ensure that the political parties have fair access to the public service broadcaster and during electoral campaigns to establish clear rules for the production, programming and broadcasting of sponsored programmes;
- to regulate the broadcasting of advertisements;
- to respond to queries and complaints from viewers and to take relevant measures;
- to define and to characterize the role of civil society organizations with respect to the revision and the updating of the mission of public service broadcasting;



To sum up it can be said that the set up of regulatory mechanisms for public communication must result from the will of the nation to better organize and to protect the freedom of information and the rights of the public so that the media in general, and the public broadcasters in particular, be able to play their part in the ongoing process of democratization.

## Public broadcasters operating according to the rules of transparency, good governance and accountability

Over and beyond the legal framework that regulates the mission of PSB, it is essential to set up modes of management that will ensure that the public broadcasters operate in full transparency and enjoy the highest possible level of autonomy in particular with regard to budget, administration and editorial management.

It is therefore necessary:

- to grant a proper juridical status and full independence from the Government to the public broadcaster;
- to set up an adequate funding system that guarantees stability and foresees the possibility to diversify sources of funding;
- to set a maximum limit to the advertising revenue and to make precise provisions with regard to the funding by any single advertiser;
- to design adequate policies for the recruitment and management of human resources in accordance with the needs and the means of the broadcasters;
- to ensure that newsrooms operate in full independence and to ensure that administrative and editorial services are managed separately;
- Assurer l'indépendance des rédactions et formaliser la séparation des services administratifs et rédactionnels ;
- to establish rules of transparency and to uphold the obligation of accountability to the public;
- to organize a mechanism to listen to and to consult with the audience.

The above recommendations also apply to the set up of independent mechanisms of regulation. In addition to the endeavors of the broadcasters and of the independent regulators, it remains necessary to support the creation of independent monitoring organizations that can provide reliable viewing statistics.

## Programming that caters to the needs of a variety of audiences

The relevance of programmes content lies at the heart of the mission of public service broadcasters and it is part of their responsibility to ensure that they respond to the legitimate expectations of their audiences. This includes the following responsibilities:

- to develop programming that is consistent with the needs of viewers and with the responsibility of the public broadcaster to inform, to educate and to entertain;
- to promote programs that respect the principles of pluralism and diversity;
- to raise the awareness of media operators and journalists about the representation of genders and about the need to foster equity between men and women both as actors and as subjects of the information;
- to elicit the active participation of the public in the production of media content;
- to foster the emergence and the development of channels and of programs in local languages and to boost the production of original products in local languages ;
- to encourage participation by viewers, through representatives consultations of the population, to train them and to listen to their views on programming.

In addition there is room for cooperation with the ministries of culture (or similar institutions) in order to foster local production in cooperation with local initiatives as well as to encourage the creation of local media outlets and community televisions.

## Building up the professional capacities of journalists and media operators with a view to uphold the ethics of journalism and to boost the mission of public service broadcasting

It is obvious that developing and upgrading the capacities of staff members within the media outlets and in particular the national broadcasters can contribute to enhancing their sense of corporate responsibility and their readiness to contribute to the mission of PBS.

It is therefore urgent to work towards the emergence of a new generation of journalists who will be aware of the principles and values of PSB and support the right to information and the freedom of expression.

Journalists can become actively involved in the set up of mechanisms of self-regulation to ensure that the mission of PSB becomes a reality and that the principles of journalistic ethics are upheld.

In order reach these objectives it will be necessary.

- to raise the awareness of media professionals about the concept of PSB ;
- to train journalists in the implementation of principles of self-regulation ;
- to train staff members at the public broadcasting outlets so that every one of them can become an agent of change ;
- Organiser des stages de formation pour les cadres dirigeants des institutions médiatiques ;
- to organize training sessions for the managers of the media outlets ;
- to strengthen academic education in the several fields of communication.

These training sessions should become part of the contractual objectives and of the books of specifications of public broadcasters.

## Public service broadcasting and due consideration to the expectations of civil society

Whilst public broadcasters have a responsibility to cover the activities of civil society organisations, the members of such organisations have a task to raise the awareness of the media to their role and presence with a view to highlight issues of general social concern.

There is a need to raise public awareness about the right of access to information, about freedom of expression as well as about the concept of public service broadcasting.

In order to reach these objectives it will be necessary

- to educate the public and to highlight the distinction between Government media and public service media
- to inform the public about the variety of tools that can be used to intervene, to act, to express expectations and to file complaints
- to organise public debates at the national level in order to highlight the issue of PSB

Civil society must participate actively in the reform process of the legal framework that regulate the media so that the expectations and legitimate needs of all layers of society be taken into account, including youth, women, minorities etc.

The participants in the present research project will monitor the implementation of the above recommendations and will

**Ensure that the regional network of specialists is upheld and strengthened so that specific capacities are put to good use in activities of lobbying, awareness raising, monitoring and technical support. They will**





### in particular join efforts with a view:

- To raise the awareness of elected representatives (members of Parliament) so that they engage with the promotion and the protection of PSB and propose draft laws to support its emergence and implementation ;
- To suggest tools and methods to promote the concept of PSB ;
- To offer methodological advice and support on media regulation ;
- To support media monitoring studies and in particular thematic monitoring about gender, youth, sports etc ;
- To develop programmes aiming at educating the public about the role of the media ;
- To train media professionals about the notions and issues relevant to PSB ;



The present publication is the outcome of research undertaken at a time when the national broadcasters in the eight countries under review were run as direct emanation of the Ministries of Information. The Arab spring has opened up new perspectives and all the participants in the present project are engaging each in his/her own country so that the public broadcasters may enter a new era in which they will safeguard the right of access to information and the freedom of expression.

#### Partners of the project :

<p><b>AMIN</b> Media Network, Palestine</p> 	<p><b>Center for Media Freedom</b> Middle East and North Africa, Morocco</p> 	<p><b>Community Media Network,</b> Jordan</p> 	<p><b>Ligue Algérienne de</b> défense des droits de l'Homme, Algérie</p> 	<p><b>Maharat</b> Foundation, Lebanon</p> 	<p><b>Associate national experts</b></p> <p>Rasha Abdulla, Egypte, Belkacem Mostefaoui, Algeria Larbi Chouikha, Tunisia</p>	<p><b>Editorial Committee Experts</b></p> <p>Dima Dabbou-Sensenig, Lebanon Roland Huguenin Benjamin, Berlin Ricardo Carniel, Barcelona,</p>
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## Françoise Havelange, a last smile.

Françoise Havelange dedicated her life to serving the cause of development, justice and rights. She studied in Madrid, Salzburg, Liège, Berkeley and Paris and had a full command of five languages. She started working with the NGO Terre des Hommes in Senegal where she set up and managed a permanent office with ten people at the beginning of the eighties.

In 1990 she joined the Institut Panos Paris and worked towards the emergence of a free press and free audio-visual broadcast providing the citizens of Western African countries with diversified and independent information. In November 2000 she was appointed general Director and under her management the IPP played a major role in the development of the media in central Africa namely in DRC, Burundi and in the Central African Republic. As of the year 2000 she also launched new partnerships in the Middle East and in North Africa to foster pluralism in the local media.

Françoise who was born in 1957 in Namur (Belgium) was always committed to the service of other people. The mixing of cultures was just part of her life as a mother of three children with roots in Senegal and in Chile. She looked at other people with understanding and compassion and never judged or condemned. In early 2011 she had to give up her professional career to concentrate her energy and her willpower to fight off a protracted and painful disease. On Wednesday July 4<sup>th</sup> she passed away after making an ultimate effort to give a last message to those who stayed by her to the end, it was her last smile.



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