



**Presentation of the
expert report on
Ukrainian legislation
concerning current
and possible
alternative models of
financing of Public
Broadcaster**

*The presentation will be held in the Council of Europe
Agora building, Room G04 from 12.30 to 14.00 on 24 January*

The presentation of the **expert report** of the Council of Europe on Ukrainian legislation concerning current and possible **alternative models of financing of the Public broadcaster** will be held in Strasbourg on 24 January 2019.

The report was requested by the *Verkhovna Rada* Committee on Freedom of Speech and Information Policy and prepared by two international experts Tanja Kerševan Smokvina and Marius Dragomir and a local expert Victor Maziarchuk in the frame of the Council of Europe “Strengthening freedom of media, access to information and reinforcing public broadcasting system in Ukraine” Project.

The launch in early 2017 of Ukraine’s newly created public service media company (UA:PBC) was heralded as a great moment for the country’s independent media. Establishing the public broadcaster was one of the obligations Ukraine took when entering the Council of Europe. However, two year later, the UA:PBC is embroiled in a crisis as legal provisions guaranteeing stable and predictable funding for the broadcaster are not complied with. In November 2018, only 57% of the funding guaranteed by law for UA:PBC was approved by the Ukrainian Parliament in the state budget for 2019. The cut, combined with accumulated debts of the UA:PBC from unpaid fees to the local broadcast transmission company, leaves the young public broadcaster with almost no

budget for programme production, while it is supposed to overhaul its operations and substantially boost its audience.

Proper funding of the public broadcaster is even more important now because there will be two rounds of elections in Ukraine in 2019 – presidential in March and parliamentary in autumn. In the environment of strong polarization of the society and media, abundance of propaganda, information disorder, fakes and biased reporting, the Ukrainian public broadcaster has a chance to set standard for unbiased and professional reporting and become a role model for other media to follow.

Therefore, the purpose of this report was to provide an expert opinion on the existing model of financing the public service broadcaster in Ukraine and to explore possibilities for creating an alternative financing model that would secure adequate funding for UA:PBC to fulfil its public service mission. The team of international and national experts analyzed current Ukrainian legislation, focused on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and risks related to the existing and proposed models, and explored other options by taking into account the Council of Europe standards, the state of the local market and feedback gathered from the stakeholders. As a result they have drafted the expert report which proposes scenarios and recommendations for funding the public broadcaster that are viable in the current Ukrainian context, presents overview of existing European and international funding models for public service media and analyzes what would and what would not work in Ukrainian realities.

The presentation of the expert report will be attended by the Members of Ukrainian Parliament, deputy Minister of Finance of Ukraine, management of the Public Broadcaster, officials of the Permanent Representation of Ukraine to the Council of Europe, representatives of the EBU and colleagues from relevant departments of the Council of Europe.