

To: PSBReview@ofcom.org.uk

Our ref/Ar faidhle: B2173128

23 June 2008

Dear Sirs,

Ofcom's Second Public Service Broadcasting Review: Phase One: The Digital Opportunity

The Scottish Government welcomes the opportunity to comment on Ofcom's proposals relating to the future of public service broadcasting. As you are undoubtedly aware, Ministers have demonstrated their concern about broadcasting in Scotland on a number of occasions and established a Scottish Broadcasting Commission to examine broadcasting in Scotland and to develop a strategic way forward for the future. The Commission is due to report in September and we would not wish to pre-empt their final report in our response to this consultation. However, there are a number of issues we would wish Ofcom to bear in mind as they move forward with this review.

The Scottish Government is strongly in favour of plurality of PSB services and for the PSB networks to contain more content that has been sourced from Scotland. We would also highlight our real concern if the Channel 3 licence holders, SMG and Border Television, were to be permitted to withdraw from their PSB responsibilities. This would pose a serious threat to plurality in Scotland, which would not be fulfilled by an increase in PSB responsibility for Channel 4 or Five given that they do not offer any "opt-out" for Scottish content to be shown.

The review of PSB has raised a number of concerns about the equality of service that will be received in some rural areas. There is a focus on the development of online services that will supplement linear television PSB. This has potential to create inequality for those who have not taken up online services, approximately 40% of the Scottish homes. Considerations should be given to whether a higher level of take up should be achieved before there is any significant move to replace any form of linear television PSB with online PSB services (although additional online services would of course be welcome).

Ofcom recognise that the Gaelic Digital Service will form an important part of Scotland's PSB landscape in the future and I would press upon Ofcom the Scottish Government's strong desire to see the new channel available on Freeview. I would urge Ofcom to use its influence to ensure that this is achieved as soon as possible.

I understand that the Scottish Broadcasting Commission has also responded to this consultation and I would endorse their response. I would also urge Ofcom to take the Commission's final report into account during the ongoing work of this review.

yours sincerely
Linda Fabiani

LINDA FABIANI

Cover sheet for response to an Ofcom consultation

BASIC DETAILS

Consultation title: Ofcom's Second Public Service Broadcasting Review

Phase One: The Digital Opportunity

To (Ofcom contact):): Vicki Nash, Director, Ofcom Scotland

Name of respondent: Linda Fabiani, Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture

Representing (self or organisation/s): The Scottish Government

Address (if not received by email):

CONFIDENTIALITY

Please tick below what part of your response you consider is confidential, giving your reasons why

Nothing

☒

Name/contact details/job title

☐

Whole response

☐

Organisation

☐

Part of the response

☐

If there is no separate annex, which parts?

If you want part of your response, your name or your organisation not to be published, can Ofcom still publish a reference to the contents of your response (including, for any confidential parts, a general summary that does not disclose the specific information or enable you to be identified)?

DECLARATION

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☐

Name

Linda Fabiani

Signed (if hard copy)

