



For immediate release – 8 September 2008

## Montenegro: Comments on Public Broadcasting Law

**ARTICLE 19 has provided comments on draft amendments to the Montenegrin public broadcasting law. The draft, released on 10 July 2008 for a 60-day consultation period, has a number of positive features, including rules designed to protect the independence of the broadcaster. At the same time, ARTICLE 19 has a number of concerns with the draft, including the system for appointing members of the governing Council and the proposed funding mechanisms.**

In addition to providing comments on the draft law, Sejal Parmar, Senior Legal Officer, ARTICLE 19, is attending a roundtable to discuss the draft from 8-9 September.

ARTICLE 19's main concerns with the draft are as follows:

- There is scope for confusion and interference with the system for appointing members of the governing Council, including in relation to the role of parliament in this key process.
- The funding mechanisms are unduly complex. They place undue constraints on the use of funds by the broadcaster. They also require the broadcaster to collect a broadcasting fee on radio and television sets, including those in automobiles, in a system which is likely to be costly and difficult to manage.
- Inadequate attention is devoted to important matters such as the mandate of the public broadcaster, the contents of its main annual reports and how the public complaints system is to be run.

ARTICLE 19 and its partners encourage the Montenegrin authorities to revise the draft amendments to bring them more fully into line with international standards, with a view to promoting a progressive public service broadcasting system in Montenegro.

### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

- The analysis is available at: <http://www.article19.org/pdfs/analysis/montenegro-broadcasting-law.pdf>
- For more information please contact Sejal Parmar, Senior Legal Officer, [sejal@article19.org](mailto:sejal@article19.org)
- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.