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EU Data Retention Directive: Tool to combat crime – or threat to free speech?

Strong feelings and opinions are being expressed in connection with proposals to implement the EU Data Retention Directive in Norwegian and Swedish legislation. All indications are that the two governments' proposals will be adopted – in the middle of March 2011 by the Swedish Parliament – at the beginning of April by the Norwegian Parliament.

"Stop the Data Retention Directive!" urge Agneta Lindblom Hulthén, chairman of the Swedish Union of Journalists, and Anna Serner, managing director of the Swedish Media Publishers' Association, in a joint statement dated 26 January 2011.

For journalists and their sources, the Swedish Government's bill is a disaster, argues the Swedish Union of Journalists and the Swedish Media Publishers' Association. They place greater emphasis on source protection than does the Swedish Ministry of Justice's rationale for its proposition 2010/11: 46 to the Parliament – that retention of traffic data for a particular type of communication in many Member States has proved to be a necessary and effective tool for law enforcement authorities, particularly in investigations of serious crime such as organized crime and terrorism. Both practical experience and research have shown the importance of traffic data for detection, investigation and prosecution of crimes.

Norwegian media organizations have the same view on source protection as the Swedish organizations. The Data Retention Directive constitutes a threat to free speech and to freedom of journalism, maintains the Norwegian Union of Journalists: Sources will fear the retention, access to data and that data could potentially be obtained by criminals, illegally.

Without strong source protection, sources will dry up, important community information may never see the light of day, but will remain hidden and unknown to the public, according to a statement from the Norwegian Press Association.

Terror fear and crime fighting

In the summer of 2004, the European Union (The Council of the European Union) took an initiative for joint action to introduce retention of traffic data – in the aftermath of the bombings in Madrid in March of that year. The intention was that measures would help European authorities in the fight against terrorism and organized crime. In the summer of 2005, London was also hit by terrorists. Several EU countries, including Sweden, came forward with proposals, which resulted in "Directive 2006/24/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2006 on the retention of data generated or processed in connection with the provision of publicly available electronic communications services or of public communications networks and amending Directive 2002/58/EC" – hereinafter referred to as the Data Retention Directive, the [Directive](#) or DRD.

The provisions of the Directive apply to retention and storage of data containing information about who communicated via telecommunications networks via telephone and the Internet, in what manner and the place and time of the communication. Contents of messages are not saved, ascertain the architects behind the implementation process – in this context the Norwegian and Swedish governments. The data are protected against any third party access; they cannot be obtained without suspicion of serious crimes and only after a court decision.

Thus, your privacy will be better protected than at present, maintains the Norwegian Government: Today IP addresses are stored for a maximum of 21 days – and the police often do not apprehend those who, for instance, post abusive images of children online, because IP addresses are deleted when the police are ready to take action.

While those who wish to introduce the Directive say that your privacy will be strengthened by the safe procedures to be applied for storage, delivery and removal of traffic data, opponents point out that the data may still end up in the wrong and criminal hands. They believe that if this were to happen, it would hit innocent people hard. Those who really have something to hide will be sure to avoid storage of their user data. There are proposals for compromise; retention of certain types of user data could be permitted, such as IP addresses, the Norwegian Data Inspectorate pointed out during a hearing in the Norwegian Parliament in February 2011. However, the Norwegian police union Politiets Fellesforbund makes it clear that such compromises are not conceivable now.

The Directive sets out a storage period of between six months and two years – the member states decide the duration themselves. Providers of publicly available telecommunications services shall be responsible for the storage of traffic data and the expenses of data storage.

After six months (proposed in Sweden) or 12 months (proposed in Norway, as implemented in Denmark and Finland), the traffic data are deleted. Average storage time in the EU countries that have implemented the Directive is 12 months, and in most countries a court order is required to obtain traffic data.

The implementation of DRD has taken time

The Directive should have been introduced in the EU member countries on 15 September 2007, but permission was given to delay implementation until 15 March 2009 for data related to Internet traffic.

Ireland, Austria, Greece and Sweden have still not implemented the directive, and neither have the EEA countries, including Norway and Iceland. Greece and Ireland were convicted in the European Court in 2009 for lack of implementation, while the EU Commission has also brought charges against Sweden, Poland, Holland and Austria. Holland and Poland have since implemented the directive. Sweden was convicted for lack of implementation in 2010.

Both Denmark and Finland adopted the Directive into national law before the end of the final deadline in 2009. In Denmark, the implementation came into force on 15 September 2007. In Finland, the Directive was implemented in June 2008.

Iceland is an EEA country like Norway, and is likely to implement the Directive. Iceland has also already introduced legislation that to some extent regulates traffic data storage. In the telecommunications law, the time limit for data retention at telecom operators is set to a maximum of six months, and the operators must notify telecommunication users when the police or a prosecuting authority requests access to data that apply to them.

Broad opposition to the Data Retention Directive

Opponents of data retention in Norway and Sweden form a loose, but broad coalition ranging from media organizations and part of the civil society to a number of political parties and public institutions. Their aim is to stop the Directive. Their reasons are mainly related to privacy – citizens' personal integrity.

In both Norway and Sweden, the political parties in opposition in the Parliament – but not all – participate in the resistance against the governments' proposals. In Norway, the two coalition partners in government, the Centre Party and Socialist Left Party, oppose implementation of the Directive, while the third partner, the Labour Party, must promote the issue alone.

There are middle positions, for example, "introduce statutory data storage at some level, but not the way prescribed by the DRD." However, few are willing to compromise, and their case is not strong: the Directive must be implemented, otherwise both the EU member Sweden and the EEA country Norway will have difficulties.

The Norwegian Government will give the police an efficient tool

"We want to fight serious crime while strengthening privacy protection," said Norwegian Minister of Justice Knut Storberget in a press release when the Government's proposals to Parliament on the implementation of DRD were presented in December 2010 – and he got the support of Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre: "It is in Norway's interest to participate in European cooperation on combating crime."

"The Data Retention Directive will ensure that the police get the tools to fight serious crime at a time when technological development is moving quickly," said Minister of Justice Storberget. He emphasized that only the traffic data and not content will be stored. The courts determine access to traffic data in each individual case. Each telecommunications provider will select the storage solution, and there are strict requirements for information security and deletion of data.

The same press release states that the bill has been prepared jointly by the Ministry of Transport and Communications (responsible for the ecom sector), the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs with special responsibility for the protection of privacy and the Ministry of Justice and the Police. The latter ministry promotes the matter to Parliament, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs's responsibility is to take the case through the EEA Joint Committee.

In February 2011, the Parliament conducted hearings over two days, where all aspects of the DRD were discussed. The preliminary date for the Parliament's consideration of the matter is set to 5 April, while the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications give their recommendation on 30 March. Before finalizing the recommendation, a draft will be sent to the Standing Committee on Justice and the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence.

Divided Norwegian Government

Already when the Norwegian Coalition Government took office in 2009, it was clear that only the Labour Party would implement the Directive, which the EEA country Norway is committed to, while the government partners, the Socialist Left Party and the Centre Party, would go against this with reference to "privacy considerations". This is what happened in the preparatory proceedings. The opposition parties – except the Conservatives – reject the proposal. If the directive is not adopted by the Parliament now, the Government must decide whether to go another round with the case. The question is how the EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA) and the European Commission will then handle the matter. The case may also have consequences for Iceland's implementation of the Directive if Norway – for the first time – were to veto implementation of an EU Directive.

A unanimous parliamentary group (the Conservatives) decides to open the door to laws regulating the storage and deletion of traffic data – but postpones the debate about what should be stored, how it should be stored and how long it should be stored, writes the Norwegian newspaper Nationen on 9 February 2011.

Until the Parliament's consideration of this matter, the Labour Party awaits the Conservative Party's decision – will the Conservatives allow each individual representative to vote freely – and will there be a sufficient number of opponents to the DRD in the Conservative Party that the proposal will not get a majority in parliament?

The Government proposes amendments to several acts, in order to implement the Directive, and it is desirable that the bill go into effect as soon as possible, the government states in its proposal to the Parliament.

DRD in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights?

The Norwegian Data Inspectorate is very critical of the introduction of DRD into Norwegian law. It writes in a consultative opinion in April 2010 that the Directive does not take sufficient account of privacy, and that it therefore violates Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The Authority assumes that data storage will be a permanent measure, which will be expanded rather than curtailed. One of the main principles in Norwegian law – that a person is innocent until proven guilty – will be lost if the directive is introduced, according to the Data Inspectorate, and it refers to the Convention's Article 6. The Inspectorate continued this criticism during the Parliament hearing in February 2011.

Representatives of the umbrella organization the Norwegian Press Association, NP, also attended the hearing in Parliament. In a consultative opinion on the Directive's introduction into Norwegian law, NP refers to the strong protection of sources in the European Convention on Human Rights, Article 10. Decisions of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) (including the Financial Times and others vs. the United Kingdom) show that the risk alone that a source can be revealed, and the "chilling effect" this could have on communication between potential sources and the press, is considered sufficient to claim that Article 10 may be violated. Thus, the Convention also protects the very trust that source protection is real. In the opinion of NP, the Data Retention Directive fully violates these principles.

Sweden convicted in the European Court of Justice

In December 2010, the Swedish Government submitted its proposition 2010/11:46 to the Parliament. Here, the Government points to the fact that the European Court of Justice, on 4 February 2010, confirmed that Sweden had not completed that part of the DRD that should have been introduced into national legislation by 15 September 2007 in a timely fashion.

Against this background, and because stored traffic data are an essential tool in the detection, investigation and prosecution of serious crime, it is essential that the new regulations take effect as soon as possible, the Government maintains.

When the report on Retention of traffic data for law enforcement (Lagring av trafikuppgifter för brottsbekämpning, SOU 2007:76) was presented to the Ministry of Justice as part of the process of introducing DRD, it was estimated that the directive could be implemented from 1 January 2009.

DRD part of a paradigm shift?

It has taken longer than that, and during the recent preparatory proceedings in the Parliament, several opposition parties have submitted motions to reject introduction of the directive. The so-called data retention is part of the paradigm shift taking place in the state's monitoring of citizens. From focusing on the monitoring of individual criminal suspects, there has been a shift towards surveillance for more loosely defined reasons, writes Jens Holm et al. (Left Party) in a motion to the Parliament, pointing to, among other things, the controversial [FRA legislation](#), which came into force in 2009.

There is a conflict between the Government's obligation to implement EU directives, on the one hand, and the European Human Rights Convention and the Swedish Constitution (regeringsformen), on the other, it is suggested. The motion states that if those obligations are in conflict, the European Convention and the Constitution, as basic democratic rules, must have priority.

Similar views are presented by Maria Ferm et al. (Greens), while Betty Malmberg (representative of the ruling Moderate Party in the Parliament), in a motion to the Parliament, is of the opinion that Sweden should work actively to strengthen personal integrity within the EU.

The media's organizations have been clear in their verdict on DRD

The Swedish Union of Journalists has protested, in various ways, against several legislative proposals during the 2000's that restrict transparency and threaten freedom of the press and protection of sources. The protests have been channelled by all the means available to a trade union: referrals, opinion articles, petitions, lectures, tips and checklists, the Union of Journalists writes in a survey article in November 2010.

The two media organizations the Swedish Union of Journalists and the Swedish Media Publishers' Association maintain, in a joint statement in January 2011, that the parliamentary process should at the very least be postponed until the EU review of the Directive is published (see below), but it would be better to put the case away completely.

The two organizations continue their argument, pointing out that by storing traffic data the state is given the opportunity to monitor journalists' sources. The security of sources and journalists' duty to protect them are further undermined. Traffic data related to communications between a source and a journalist can be revealed without suspicion of a serious crime. In our technology-dependent society, it is impossible for journalists to work without the help of technology. We will give journalists and publishers advice on what methods they should use to protect themselves and their sources, but the hard truth is that today this is almost impossible, the Swedish Union of Journalists and the Swedish Media Publishers' Association declare.

The Committee on Justice's report will be ready at the beginning of March 2011, while the reading in Parliament, according to schedule, will take place on 16th March. The implementation will enter into force on 1 July 2011, amending several acts.

"Data retention is here to stay"

The Data Retention Directive has attracted partly polarized debate in several European countries. The Romanian Constitutional Court in October 2009 issued a verdict that assumed that the Romanian law that implements the Data Retention Directive is in violation of the

Romanian Constitution, and thus also in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights Article 8, regarding the right to privacy.

The German Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe in 2010 concluded that the German act governing the storage provisions of the Directive did not provide adequate protection of stored data. These provisions came into conflict with Article 10 of the German Constitution. The Constitutional Court did not consider the Directive as a whole to be unconstitutional.

These processes have not gone unnoticed in the EU system. In December 2010, the ongoing evaluation process was summarized during the conference [Taking on the Data Retention Directive](#). On that occasion, Cecilia Malmström, EU Commissioner responsible for Home Affairs, said several times, according to a [press release](#) from the European Commission, that data retention will be a permanent tool in the fight against crime: "data retention is here to stay". In other words, making major amendments to the DRD now, to meet the demands of the most critical voices, is out of the question.

Commissioner Malmström will carefully study the evaluation report after it is published in 2011. She may think of better and more unified EU procedures for access to traffic data, and will discuss whether carriers should be compensated for the cost of retention out of public funds. What types of data are to be stored should also be subject to reconsideration, according to Cecilia Malmström.

Nordic cooperation

Extended collaboration between public service and commercial broadcasters?

[Nordic cooperation]

The culture-bearing role of Nordic public service broadcasters was discussed by over 100 representatives of Nordic media, during a conference in Copenhagen recently. More than 100 Nordic media people attended the conference, that was organized by the Foundation for Danish-Norwegian cooperation, with support from the Nordic Culture Fund.

New forms of cooperation between the Nordic public service and commercial broadcasters also became an issue. Private media operators in the Nordic countries are dependent on advertising revenue on the new digital platforms to meet the competition from big international companies like Google and Facebook, maintained Lisbeth Knudsen, CEO of Danish Berlingske Media, at a conference in Copenhagen in early February.

We need an entirely new form of collaboration, where, for instance, public service broadcasters make their content freely available for commercial operators, Lisbeth Knudsen said, according to [norden.org](#).

She won the support of, among others, Lars Engqvist, chairman of the board of the Swedish public service broadcaster Sveriges Television, who welcomed extended co-operation between public service broadcasters and commercial actors, but stressed that the public service broadcasters still must be able to develop on the market's premises. We must decide what platforms we will be on or else we will be reduced to historical archives, Engqvist stated.

Source: Nordic Council / Nordic Council of Ministers (11 February 2011)

Audiovisual media

New public service contract for DR

[Audiovisual media] [Denmark]

The new contract between the Ministry of Culture and public service broadcaster DR establishes the public service obligations DR shall meet during the period 2011-2014. DR will receive between DKK 3.5 and 4 billion in license funds every year in this period. The contract is part of the government's media contract for the same period and is the result of a constructive dialogue between DR and the media policy spokesmen of the political parties behind the agreement, according to the press release.

In the press release, Minister of Culture Per Stig Møller stresses that DR will now have more freedom and less detailed control, among other things in relation to the selection of suitable communication platforms – enabling DR to customize its public service content to the current development. As a counterpart to platform neutrality, the contract, as agreed upon, focuses on the core content that DR must deliver.

Source: The Ministry of Culture (28 January 2011)

Competitive tendering of FM 4 permit

[Audiovisual media] [Denmark]

The deadline for applying for permission to operate the fourth Danish nationwide FM channel – FM 4 – was 28 February 2011. Operating subsidies will be given from public service funds, which is part of the Media Agreement 2011-2014, were FM 4 was released as a new and current events public service radio station, prohibiting public service broadcaster DR from the competitive tendering round.

The Radio and Television Board, on behalf of the Ministry of Culture, is responsible for the tender, and the Board awards the permit after a "beauty contest" with elements of economy, as declared in a press release on the matter. The criteria are the content to be transmitted, the quality and merits of the applicant's plan for the operation, and how much funding the applicant believes will be necessary to carry the channel.

Berlingske Media will apply for the permit as planned, and do it now in collaboration with the successful and widely branched Danish media company, PeopleGroup, Berlingske Media writes on 22 February. On 28 February the only application received by The Radio and Television Board before the deadline, came from this grouping.

Source: The Radio and Television Board / Berlingske Media (17 January / 22 February 2011)

Danish films are increasing their market share

[Audiovisual media] [Denmark]

On the domestic market, Danish films had a 22.2 percent market share in 2010, an improvement from the 2009 level of 17 percent, but a clear decline from the average of 28 percent in the period 2000-2008, [according](#) to the Nordisk Film & TV Fond newsletter.

Overall – counting both foreign and Danish movies – nearly 13 million tickets were sold in 2010, a decrease from the previous two years (6 percent compared to 2009, 3.5 percent compared to 2008).

Source: Nordisk Film & TV Fond's newsletter (13 January 2011)

New film efforts in Finland

[Audiovisual media] [Finland]

The Ministry of Education and Culture has allocated a total of EUR 27,436,000 to the Finnish Film Foundation for the production and distribution of film, screening and the promotion of film culture. Under the incumbent government, funding has increased by EUR 12 million, or 68 percent, the Minister of Education and Culture, Stefan Wallin, states in a press release. The subsidies are financed by lottery funds and around 70 percent of the means are allocated to the production of films and TV programmes and the Foundation's share of support for Nordisk Film & TV Fond. About 10 percent goes to film distribution and the Finnish share of support for Filmkontakt Nord.

Wallin, however, is concerned that Finnish public broadcaster YLE does not appear to be a strong co-funding source for Finnish films, something that he thinks is caused by YLE's general economic situation.

Almost EUR 1.5 million are channelled to the digitization of Finnish cinemas, a special programme that was started in 2008. Stefan Wallin believes that the large national market share of Finnish films in 2010, 27 percent, is partly due to the fact that premiere films can now be displayed at a large number of locations. 27 percent is the best result since modern Finnish film statistics were introduced in 1969, [writes](#) Nordisk Film & TV Fond's newsletter. Compared to 2009, the admission for Finnish films rose by 50 percent. Overall, 7.3 million tickets were sold for Finnish and foreign films, up by 8 percent from 2009.

Source: Nordisk Film & TV Fond's newsletter / The Ministry of Education and Culture (13 January / 1 February 2011)

Local films' market share increased in 2010

[Audiovisual media] [Iceland]

Three Icelandic films were among the top-20 movies, as in 2009, Ragnar Bragason's comedy Bjarnfreðarson being the most popular. The Icelandic cinema box office has been little affected by the financial crisis.

Eleven percent – slightly up from 2009 – was the market share for Icelandic films in 2010. A slight fall in the number of tickets sold in 2010, down to 1,560,000 from 1,690,000 the previous years – did not prevent the total cinema revenue from reaching a new peak: ISK 1,474,536,620, or about EUR 9.3 million, [reports](#) Nordisk Film & TV Fond's newsletter.

Source: Nordisk Film & TV Fond's newsletter (7 February 2011)

ESA investigates the financing of RÚV

[Audiovisual media] [Iceland]

The EFTA Surveillance Authority, ESA, has asked the Icelandic authorities to change certain features of the way the country's public service broadcaster RÚV is financed. ESA [states](#) the need for greater transparency in the way public funds are used, with a view to identifying potential anti-competitive effects.

Iceland must use the ESA guidelines on state aid for public service broadcasters, it is pointed out. RÚV is a state-owned corporation, financed partly by a tax earmarked for the media, partly by commercials and sponsorship. ESA has given Iceland a deadline until the second half of March 2011 to respond to how RÚV's funding can be brought into compliance with the guidelines.

Source: The EFTA Surveillance Authority, ESA (10 February 2011)

No enthusiasm for individual channel selection

[Audiovisual media] [Norway]

A broadly based working group examining the possibility that consumers, to a greater extent than now, could be able to choose individual channels – instead of the distributors' channel packages – does not recommend regulation requiring that the industry offer individual channels.

One main objection to free channel selection is, according to a press release from the Ministry of Culture, that it is uncertain whether the regulation would have the desired effect on price, quality, freedom of choice and diversity.

The Working Group proposes instead measures to increase consumer awareness of the TV market and that market participants should consider open solutions to Internet-based TV, followed by increased public investment in construction of high capacity networks. Establishment of a permanent group to monitor developments and competition in the TV market and conduct consumer surveys is also a measure proposed.

Source: The Ministry of Culture (14 February 2011)

Digitalization of radio

[Audiovisual media] [Norway]

The Ministry of Culture has published a white paper on the digitalization of radio. FM broadcasts may end in 2017, if certain conditions are met: Among other things, a certain proportion of the population must have access to digital radio offers in 2015 before the FM networks are closed down in 2017. There are special requirements for digital coverage for both public service broadcaster NRK and the commercial channels. In addition, the transition to digital radio must entail listeners getting an added value in the form of number of channels, content, services, and better sound and reception.

If the digital coverage (online channels, DAB or similar technology, radio via television networks, etc.) is not considered to be sufficiently large in 2017, the termination of FM broadcasting will be postponed until 2019. Nevertheless, most local radio stations can expect to be able to use FM, even after NRK and the major commercial radio stations have gone digital, the press release states.

Source: The Ministry of Culture (4 February 2011)

Record high market share of Norwegian films at the local box office

[Audiovisual media] [Norway]

Norwegian films had a market share of 23.2 percent in 2010, which means 2.5 million admissions. The total number of admissions was 11 million, down 13 percent from 2009.

The market share in 2010 was the largest since 1975. Ten Norwegian films had more than 100,000 admissions, the newsletter of Nordisk Film & TV Fond [writes](#). A children's film, *Knerten ties the knot*, was the second most watched regardless of nationality, with more than 400,000 tickets sold.

The trade association Film & Kino reports that Norwegians rank among the top spenders in the world when it comes to spending money on film – adjusted for the number of inhabitants. In 2010, the Norwegians spent over NOK 3 billion on film viewing. This includes the revenue of cinema theatres, movie sales in stores, movie rental stores and legally downloaded movies, states Film & Kino.

Source: Nordisk Film & TV Fond's newsletter / Film & Kino (13 January / 8 February 2011)

Radio and television fee and public service broadcasting: the subject of debate

[Audiovisual media] [Sweden]

In the Swedish Parliament, there is now – for the first time – a majority in favour of amending today's system of financing public service broadcasting, writes trade paper *Riksdag & Departement*. Today, the radio and television fee is associated with ownership of a television set.

Nine out of ten Swedes who should, according to today's rules, pay the radio and television fee actually pay, and this is considered a very high figure. Nevertheless, a number of Swedish parliamentary politicians think that now is the time for a change. The current system is disintegrating. Technology development is fast. It is now the process must begin to review how we fund public service broadcasting in the future, says Andreas Carlson, cultural policy spokesman for the Christian Democrats, to *Riksdag & Departement*.

His view is accompanied by that of the Social Democrat chairman of the Culture Committee, Berit Högman: "The evolution of technology makes it irrelevant to link the fee to the appliance, as it is done today."

In 2008, tax financing of the activities of the public service broadcasters was investigated as an alternative to the radio and television fee, but this was not recommended at the time. The

advantage of a license-based financing is that it provides an independent source, the money comes directly from the TV viewers, not from the politicians, Riksdag & Departement states.

The Centre Party and the Christian Democrats point out that it is possible to earmark a public service fee related to all taxpayers, just as is done with the burial fee. This can create stable funding and independence, because the funds for the operation of public service broadcasters' activities do not come directly from the state budget.

The issue of public service funding is relevant now, because the Minister of Culture, Lena Adelsohn Liljeroth, will announce in the spring a new Public Service investigation, which will map out the conditions for SVT, SR and UR after 2013, when today's broadcasting license expires. The Culture Committee is of the opinion that this investigation should also review the questions of financing, according to Riksdag & Departement.

In a debate article in Dagens Nyheter, Sveriges Television's managing director, Eva Hamilton, comments on the upcoming debate on public service broadcasting funding: Public service must be innovative if broadcasters want to continue to be important to the entire population. (...) the Internet must be seen as an integral part of the core business. When more people are receiving TV programmes via PC or mobile phone, there is also a need to amend, if only partly, the radio and television fee. However, in order for public service broadcasters to remain politically independent, the responsibility for collecting the fee should stay with the broadcasters. A broadly based programme commission is also fundamental to the new broadcasting license (after 2013).

Sveriges Radio also wants to contribute to the debate. On 24 February, Mats Svegfors (managing director) and Cilla Benkö (vice managing director) submitted a statement of intent to the Government. They propose a separate act for public service broadcasters, and declare that such an act is essential to securing radio free speech and freedom of development as well as independent, stable and sustained funding, according to trade paper Medievärlden.

Source: Riksdag & Departement / Dagens Nyheter / Medievärlden (21 / 22 / 24 February 2011)

Focus on industry cooperation for financing Swedish film [Audiovisual media] [Sweden]

The Ministry of Culture has adopted directives to a special investigator (negotiator) with a mandate to bring about new industry cooperation for the financing of Swedish film. Lennart Foss has been appointed negotiator, according to a press release.

Long-term and broad cooperation – with more active players than today – is the target of the investigator. Both the parties of the current Film Agreement and new parties will participate in discussions on the new initiative. The study shall be completed no later than 31 December 2011.

Source: The Ministry of Culture (17 February 2011)

Stable market share of local films at the box office

[Audiovisual media] [Sweden]

The Swedish films' market share fell in 2010 from a record high of 32.7 percent in 2009 to 21 percent, writes Nordisk Film & TV Fond's newsletter. This is characterized as stable, justified by the fact that 2009 was an exceptional year with three Millennium films, and that the 2010 results are in line with figures from the previous decade.

Total cinema admissions fell in 2010 from the record in 2009, 17.3 million to 15.8 million. Yet this is still higher than in the four years before the "Millennium" year 2009. Several of the Swedish films released in 2010 placed high on the top-ten list, regardless of nationality.

Digitization of the Swedish cinema theatres (121 digital screens in 2010) may lead to a decrease for small cinemas that cannot afford to participate in the process, and lost market shares for Swedish and non-US foreign films, analyst at the Swedish Film Institute, Torkel Stål, fears, [according](#) to Nordisk Film & TV Fond's newsletter. In the 20 largest Swedish cities, cinema admissions rose in 2010, while they declined in a number of small towns.

Source: Nordisk Film & TV Fond's newsletter (7 February 2011)

Information Society

Government subsidies in a digitized media world

[Information Society] [Denmark]

In October 2011, the Ministry of Culture's committee to consider future media support will submit its report. The committee's concern is that the billions given in government subsidies must ensure critical and independent news coverage also in the future.

In a feature article in Berlingske Tidende, committee chairman Henning Dyremose describes a possible trend towards fully digital newspapers: In such a situation, both high production costs, i.e. printing on paper, and the cost of distributing the newspapers will have been cut out.

Well, then we've basically got (DKK) 340 million per year, which today is used in distributing support, that can be brought into play for other, perhaps more content-producing purposes. It's distant music, someone will say. Yes, but still quite feasible, Dyremose writes.

Source: Berlingske Tidende (16 January 2011)

Finland's Broadband Forum wants faster network connections

[Information Society] [Finland]

Suvi Lindén, Minister of Transport and Communications, in a speech during this year's Broadband Forum, organized by the Ministry, said that it is very important for broadband development in Finland that telecommunications companies invest in high speed broadband networks built on a commercial basis in towns and cities. For us to achieve the national broadband goal before the end of 2015, we must invest in those areas where 95 percent of Finns live, Lindén added.

Broadband Forum (Bredbandsforum) is a meeting place for experts and opinion makers, debating fast broadband connections and the opportunities that open up when they are implemented.

Source: The Ministry of Transport and Communications (17 February 2011)

MBL wants platform-independent press subsidies

[Information Society] [Norway]

MBL (the Norwegian Media Businesses' Association), in a letter to the Ministry of Culture, requests platform-independent criteria for allocation of production subsidies, and administrative restructuring of the allocation conditions in mid-February. These are proposals that came from the Ministry's committee for media support in its report from last December, and MBL believes this can be implemented as soon as possible.

The daily newspapers have important democratic functions, and diversity is an important press policy goal, MBL maintains. Now we are witnessing a transition from print to digital publishing and distribution. If newspapers eligible for subsidies do not get support based on their electronic editions, it is possible that they will not be able to cope with this transition, and this would have very negative consequences for the ability to maintain the required newspaper diversity in the future, MBL writes, among other things.

Source: The Norwegian Media Businesses' Association (27 January 2011)

Coordination secretariat for digital preservation is created

[Information Society] [Sweden]

The National Archives has been commissioned by the Government to create a coordinating secretariat for digitization and digital preservation and digital dissemination of the cultural heritage during the period 2011-2015. The secretariat should be organized as a separate unit at the National Archives.

The work of digitization in the field of culture is an important part of the Government's work on e-government and the overall action plan for digitization – A digital agenda for Sweden – according to a press release from the Ministry of Culture.

Recently, the Ministry of Culture received a survey of the efforts to contribute to a national strategy for the digitization, online accessibility and digital preservation carried out by public authorities and institutions.

Source: The Ministry of Culture (10 February 2011)

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