

Ref: MF 2014 15 ? BD_3012

Ms Nadia Bellardi
Vice-President
Community Media Forum Europe
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Re: Dublin Community Television (DCTV)

Dear Ms Bellardi

Thank you for your letter of 14th January in relation to funding for Dublin Community Television.

Firstly, let me acknowledge the importance that Community media plays in society and in providing a distinct third strand of Irish broadcasting, sitting alongside commercial and public service broadcasting. Community television and radio stations provide a social benefit to the communities they serve allowing for community access and participation. They are uniquely situated so that the output of each station reflects the special interests and needs of its intended listenership.

In relation to the Sound and Vision II Scheme, which is administered by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI), the scheme was initiated in January 2010 via the Broadcasting Funding Scheme and up to the end of 2012 just over ?43.5 million has been awarded.

The Sound and Vision Scheme is run as a competitive process and funding cannot be guaranteed under these Schemes, rendering DCTV's reliance on such a funding source as challenging to the viability of the service.

EU State Aid approval for the existing Scheme terminates at the end of this year and, in anticipation of this, in November 2013, the

BAI issued a consultation paper on a proposed replacement Scheme. The period of consultation on this closed in January and it is my understanding that the BAI is now considering the results of this consultation process, including the submissions received from the community media sector, prior to finalising the draft of the proposed replacement scheme. I expect that this draft scheme will be submitted for my approval in March.

I can confirm that the draft Scheme will be examined by my Department to ensure that it adequately fulfils the relevant policy objectives as enunciated in the legislation, including those relating to the development of community radio. EU State Aid approval will also be required prior to the new Scheme becoming operational on 1 January 2015.

I trust that this clarifies the position.

Yours sincerely

Pat Rabbitte, T.D.

Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources