

Government to table bill reinstating public TV ERT on Monday

On Monday, the government will table a draft bill to parliament on the reopening of former public broadcaster ERT, which was shut down by the previous government.

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07 Mar. 15

The bill will include provisions for the return of the employees who were laid off in 2013, when the-then New Democracy-led government coalition closed it down, and for a smooth transition to ERT from the state channel NERIT which replaced it. It will also include an audit of NERIT.

The government said the new state TV will be competitive and will operate based on its true mission, which is to inform, educate and entertain the public. ERT will be truly independent from any public or private interests, ensuring polyphony, independent information and high quality content.

The broadcaster's funding will derive from the fee collected through power utility bills for public television and will not burden the state budget, the government added. It will be run by a seven-member board of directors, two of which will be representatives of the employees. The bill will also include provisions abolishing benefits and privileges.

The upcoming bill has been under attack by the European partners in Brussels and has become an item in the ongoing negotiations. European lenders are worried that the re-hiring of the 2,500 ERT employees who were laid off will place a burden on the country's already stressed out

budget.

The government has offered no backup plan if the European partners refuse to greenlight the bill, but according to reports, if that happens, it could push the bill further, tabling it after the end of the summer.

Source: AMNA

<http://www.thetoc.gr/eng/news/article/government-to-table-bill-reinstating-public-tv-ert-on-monday>