

REPORT

Another License Fee is Possible

For an Earmarked and Fair Funding of Public Service Media

_Julia Cagé

Julia Cagé wishes to thank

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Introduction

In March 2022, Emmanuel Macron, then candidate for President of the Republic (subsequently re-elected), announced the government's decision to scrap the “public broadcasting contribution” in France, better known as the license fee. This took place in the summer and was presented as a measure designed to increase purchasing power. It was therefore expected to be popular with vast swathes of the population.

This scrapping of the license fee was certainly popular among a part of the French political class, because it was included not only in the platform of Macron's *La République En Marche!* (LREM) party, but also in that of right-wing candidate Valérie Pécresse (*Les Républicains*), and far-right candidates Marine Le Pen (*Rassemblement National*) and Éric Zemmour (*Reconquête!*). Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the license fee has repeatedly come under attack during recent years. In January 2022, the British government froze it for two years and announced its plan to abolish it altogether in 2027. In Denmark in 2018, the government decided to scrap the public service broadcasting fee, making a transition from media license to direct funding from the state budget.¹ In Germany, the far-right party Alternative for Germany (AfD) has been fighting against the license fee for years.

Why are so many political parties and ruling governments attacking the license fee? Funding is the main pressure experienced by public broadcasters, and so replacing the existing earmarked funding of public service media (PSM) with funding from the state budget may be a way for governments to regain control of public broadcasters. Furthermore,

this comes at a relatively low cost from a political point of view: trust in news is at a historic low (Reuters Institute 2018; Pew Research Center 2016; Cagé and Huet 2021), and even though on average public broadcasters tend to be more trusted than private media, they are still subject to widespread mistrust. While the news media – both public and private – have been increasingly under attack in recent years², the lack of mobilization to defend them around the world is striking.

For all that, does it mean that the scrapping of the license fee reflects a popular demand? That the majority of citizens are also in favor of weakening the public funding of public service broadcasters? In France and many other Western democracies, the counterpart of the license fee is funding for film, the development of fiction, documentaries, new creations, etc., which are not the same on the public service as on private broadcasting. Above all, there is a high-quality public information service, which only exists because (and if) it is correctly funded. The quality of this public information is also the result of its independence, which is guaranteed in part by the existence of earmarked resources. Would it not, therefore, be preferable to ensure that such an earmarked contribution is maintained?

To answer this question, we decided to directly survey citizens. While the results presented in this report could have policy implications for many countries – and we are going to discuss reforms that took place all over Europe – we conducted our survey in the French context, taking advantage of the “2022 electoral survey” conducted jointly by Ipsos, the Fondation Jean-Jaurès, *Le Monde* and the Cevipof at

1. The fee has been phased out over a five-year period.

2. See e.g., among many others, the article published by *The Economist* on May 3, 2022, “Press freedom is under attack” (<https://www.economist.com/interactive/briefing/2022/05/03/press-freedom>).

Sciences Po Paris¹. Never before has such an ambitious survey questioned the French population (nor, to the extent of our knowledge, adults in other democracies) about their preferences regarding the funding of the public broadcasting service. Importantly, rather than offering the citizens a binary choice of “for or against the license fee”, which is in fact totally misleading as it ignores the direct contrary implication of “for or against the end of public broadcasting”², we offered them a range of other possibilities – for a given amount devoted to the public broadcasting service – based on international experience, in particular the reforms recently implemented in Finland, Norway and Sweden, which transformed the former license fee into a new tax allocated to the broadcasting service, but one that is more fairly distributed and better accepted.

The conclusion of this survey – which we will be detailing in this report – is clear: for a constant budget, 16% of the French population surveyed wish to keep the license fee in its current form, 34.5% wish to keep the license fee in another form (with a preference for a progressive income-based tax allocated to funding public broadcasting), while only 20.6% of those surveyed are in favor of direct government funding, i.e. scrapping the fee and funding the public broadcasting service from the state’s general budget. The rest of those surveyed did not express an opinion. Perhaps surprisingly, we find the same results among the respondents who voted for Emmanuel Macron in the first round of the presidential election: 48.6% want to retain the license fee or replace it with an earmarked but progressive contribution, and only 21.9% (in other words half as many) want to scrap it. Those who voted for Éric Zemmour and Marine Le Pen are the most numerous to wish to scrap the license fee altogether (up to 26.6% of them in the case of Zemmour voters). However, in all cases, the overall preference is to keep

a fairer type of license fee, comparable to what has been done in Northern Europe over the past decade.

The license fee as it stood in France before it was abolished – and as it still stands in many Western democracies – was far from perfect and should doubtless have been reformed a long time ago. First, the same amount was charged to all households (138 euros per year per household in France), and the payment was linked to the possession of a television set. Yet many households today receive the information produced by the public broadcasting service without actually owning a TV; television programs (not to mention radio) are consumed on a wide variety of platforms. For this reason, numerous countries such as Germany have reformed the license fee in recent years, such that everyone (or everyone owning a screen) is required to pay it.

Furthermore, the license fee in its “traditional form” is a regressive and thus unfair tax: as a percentage of income, it indeed weighs more heavily on those with lesser means. This is why it has become means-based in Scandinavian countries in recent years (i.e. the poor contribute less than the rich). But reforming the license fee does not mean scrapping it altogether; reforming it should mean replacing it with a contribution that is also directly earmarked to fund public service broadcasters, but in a fairer way.

Of course, I am by no means suggesting that reforming PSM funding is an easy task. I am well aware that in recent years there have been fierce debates over the reform of PSM funding in many countries.³ But this is a discussion that we need to have collectively, not only in France, but also in Germany, the UK and other countries where independent public broadcasting services are under threat. This debate may indeed have serious consequences for the state of democracy and the quality of the public debate.

1. This survey was carried out from 3 to 6 June 2022. It comprises a sample of 10,826 people, representative of the French population registered on the electoral roll and aged 18 and over (see e.g. Cagé, Hengel, and Huang 2023).

2. Nissen (2018b), when discussing the funding of the public media in Denmark, similarly highlights that if you simply ask people “Do you agree that DR [the main PSM institution in Denmark] should continue to receive licence fee?”, you usually obtain a low support for upholding the license fee, but if you ask them an open question such as “How should DR to your opinion be financed”, the most popular answer is the license fee.

3. E.g. in Finland in 2013, “the decision to replace the license fee marked an end of a political process that encompassed several year of heated debate, two government terms, and many difficulties, U-turns and compromises” (Karppinen and Ala-Fossi 2017).

In this report I will describe several possible scenarios for an earmarked contribution that enjoys the support of a majority of the French population (and I believe would also receive the support of a large share of citizens in other countries). Such a contribution has at least two advantages when compared with the

direct government funding of PSM: on the one hand, it helps maintain the independence of the public broadcasting service by making it less reliant on the goodwill of whichever government is in power and, on the other hand, it guarantees a certain amount of stability in terms of funding.

What is the license fee?

People may not know that the license fee – introduced in the United Kingdom in 1923, in Denmark in 1925 or in France in 1933 to finance the growth of public radio¹ – is almost as old as broadcasting technology itself!

Although it has been scrapped by a number of European countries in recent years, it is still used in 25 of the 56 member countries of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU)² (or 44% including Austria, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Ireland and Portugal), and 46% of European Union countries (13 out of 27). Furthermore, countries such as Finland, Sweden and Norway, which strictly speaking no longer have a license fee, have replaced it with an earmarked tax. In terms of maintaining independent and sustainable funding, this is equivalent – or even preferable – to the license fee, and is more fiscally equitable. We will return to this point later in the report.

The amount of the license fee – and hence the resources of PSM – varies widely from one country to the next. For example, according to data from the European Broadcasting Union³, the license fee amounts to 340.98 euros in Switzerland, 300.03 euros in Austria, 210 euros in Germany, 173 euros in

the United Kingdom, and 138 euros in France (with an average value of 125.44 euros for the European Union countries). While some of these amounts might sound high, it is important to note that the historical trends are declining and that, on average, public broadcasters tend to be under-funded; as highlighted by Powers (2018) *“in general, funding for public media has not kept pace with increasing costs”*.

With an annual 138 euros per household in metropolitan France (before the fee was scrapped)⁴, it brought in about 3.7 billion euros⁵ every year to fund the public information service, that is France Télévisions, Radio France, but also Arte France, France Médias Monde and the Institut national de l’audiovisuel (INA).⁶ For each of these organizations, the license fee was a vital source of funding: it represented about 82% of turnover for France Télévisions (2.431 billion euros out of 2.955), 86.4% for Radio France⁷ and 95% for Arte, an advertising-free channel. Similarly in Germany, both the first and second PSM channels, ARD and ZDF, were financed around 85% from the license fee in 2018. In Austria, 63.8% of the ORF’s income was generated by the license fee.

1. Act of 31 May, 1933. It was then expanded in the UK (respectively in France) to take in television in 1946 (respectively 1949).

2. The European Broadcasting Union was created in 1950 and is the world’s largest professional association of national broadcasters.

3. www.ebu.ch/publications/research/membersonly/report/licence-fee.

4. 88 euros for the overseas departments and territories. The amounts of the public broadcasting contribution applicable in metropolitan France and the overseas departments are set out in section III of Article 1605 of the General Tax Code (CGI).

5. 3,140.5 million euros in 2022 to which must be added 560.8 million euros representing exemptions from the license fee covered by the state budget (amounts exempted for persons of low income or with vested rights). Before the fee was scrapped in 2022, all households (as defined by the so-called *“taxe d’habitation”*, i.e. the French housing tax) which own a television set or “any other comparable device” (such as a DVD player or player-recorder) were required to pay it, i.e. some 27.61 million households were liable for the tax in 2022, out of which 22.89 million actually paid it (according to the budget bill: www.senat.fr/rap/l21-163-319/l21-163-31912.html#toc208).

6. In 2022, 65% of the revenue from the license fee went to France Télévisions, 15.9% to Radio France, 7.5% to Arte France, 7% to France Médias Monde, 2.4% to INA and the remaining 2.1% to TV5 Monde.

7. <https://www.radiofrance.com/contribution-laudiovisuel-public>.

The far right against the license fee

We might therefore wonder: why is the license fee under attack in so many countries? Why has the British government just frozen it? Why, in France, did the government reduce it from 139 to 138 euros in 2020? Why was its inflation indexing removed after 2019? And why was it finally scrapped in 2022?

Short-term politics are obviously at play here. In France, the scrapping was announced by Emmanuel Macron as the first economic measure of his presidential campaign, and was presented as a means of boosting purchasing power. Given the current context of inflation and pressure on purchasing power, “giving back” 138 euros per year to each household may, at first glance, seem a good idea.¹ But there is a more fundamental issue to consider: by abolishing the license fee, governments are attacking public service broadcasting itself, both the very notion of PSM and the independence of public broadcasters. Not surprisingly, far-right parties have always been at the forefront of these attacks. For years, the extreme right in France was the only party willing to abolish the license fee and, as we have already highlighted, the AfD long opposed the license fee in Germany. In Denmark, the scrapping of the license was implemented under the VLAK cabinet, but with the support of the nationalist Dansk Folkeparti. The end of the license fee is usually accompanied by a weakening of public broadcasters: in 2018, the Danish proposal that scrapped the fee also included a 20% budget cut for the biggest state TV and radio outlet; two of the six TV channels of the national PSM Institution (DR) were shut down.²

To put it another way, as highlighted for example by Holtz-Bacha (2021), in recent years public service

broadcasting has become one of the main targets of attacks by far-right political parties: *“with more and more populist parties entering parliaments and gaining also executive power, their assaults on public broadcasting rattle the foundations of West European media systems and threaten an important pillar of democracy.”* This does not mean that the license fee should be saved at all costs; on the contrary, it means that it is vital to understand the imperfections of the license fee as it still exists in a large number of countries, and to reform it before far-right movements decide to scrap it irreversibly.

The imperfections of the existing system

Let us insist on this point: the license fee in its current form – i.e. as it exists in Germany or the UK, or as it was implemented in France until 2022 – is not the best way of funding the public broadcasting service. However, underlining the imperfections of the license fee and wishing to put an end to the earmarked contribution are two completely different things.

What are the limitations of the license fee in its current form? On the one hand, in many countries (such as France until 2022), the public broadcasting contribution only applies to households with a television set, which no longer reflects the multiple ways people consume television. In France – just like in many other Western democracies – the number of households owning a TV set dropped from 98% in 2012 to 92% in 2020, at a time when the average number of screens per home is continuing to grow. This creates a form of injustice which can only fuel public opposition to the license fee. The non-

1. Another argument used in the French context to justify the end of the license fee was the scrapping of the *taxe d'habitation* (household tax). However, this argument does not hold. Admittedly, the license fee was hitherto collected at the same time as the *taxe d'habitation* in France, but even those completely exempt from payment of the *taxe d'habitation* still had to pay the license fee. This shows that putting an end to one in no way necessitates terminating the other. All the more so as, technically speaking, it would be entirely possible – although it would not make a great deal of sense – for the license fee, even in the absence of the *taxe d'habitation*, to be maintained on the existing basis of the households subject to the *taxe d'habitation*, provided that this list is correctly verified every year. In passing, it should also be noted that the license fee has only been incorporated into the *taxe d'habitation* in France since 2005, which clearly shows that it can be collected in some other way!

2. For a detailed analysis of the Danish Media Political Settlement 2018, see e.g. Nissen (2018a).

payment of the license fee has indeed been an issue for many years in many countries; in the UK for example, non-payment of the license fee is growing, and reaches 10% in Scotland, 9% in Northern Ireland and 6% in England and Wales (see e.g. Grayson 2022).¹ The problem of license fee fraud, which is widespread in certain places, further reduces its acceptability.

Furthermore, linking the payment of the license fee to the ownership of a TV set leads to an inexorable decline in its collection base – and thus in the resources used to fund the broadcasting service. For example, the number of French households subject to the fee went from 27.77 million in 2019 to 27.61 million in 2022, even though the total number of households continued to rise over the same period.

It would thus appear to be obvious that the license fee – or the earmarked contribution we propose using to replace it – must apply to all households rather than simply those owning a TV set. A reform such as this would not only keep step with changing trends, but also with the reforms implemented by many countries a long time ago, beginning with Germany. 68% of the countries of the European Broadcasting Union which have a license fee today apply it to all connected devices – or in some cases simply to all households, as is the case in Germany, Switzerland, Portugal and Serbia, but also Turkey and several countries in North Africa – rather than just television sets. France is an exception, along with Ireland, Poland, Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Furthermore, in its current form, the license fee is a profoundly unjust tax because, as a percentage of

resources, it represents a disproportionately heavy burden on those with a lower income. It would be rather like asking each household to pay a “primary school fee” of 7,000 euros per child (the level of public spending per pupil in French primary education), regardless of the parents’ income. It is therefore easy to paint it as “unpopular”!

Interestingly, historically these two caveats of the license fee were not considered flaws – quite the contrary. The fact of linking the payment of the fee to the ownership of a radio or a television set was what made the tax “progressive” given that, at the time, the fact of owning a television could be seen as a luxury good since only those households whose income was high enough could purchase one. Today, however, given that “everyone” can buy a TV, the flat fee is intrinsically unfair, and given that an increasing share of people no longer use a TV to watch TV content, linking payment to ownership of a TV set makes it outdated.

For all that, this does not mean that citizens are not attached to an earmarked – but fair – funding of their PSM. The results of the “No billag” popular initiative undertaken in 2018 in Switzerland, during which people voted against abolishing the license fee, would suggest the opposite. To investigate whether this is the case, we decided to carry out a large-scale survey in France by proposing three credible scenarios to the population: (i) keeping the license fee in its current form; (ii) replacing it with a contribution that is also earmarked, but progressive; and finally (iii) funding the public broadcasting service directly from the government budget.

1. Because of this issue of non-payment and growing public opposition to the license fee, the fee was reformed in Italy in 2015 and incorporated into the electricity bill.

How to reform the license fee?

As already highlighted, a survey giving serious consideration to the issue of how to fund public service radio and television cannot simply ask individuals: are you for or against the license fee? People might oppose the very existence of PSM – which is the case of numerous far-right political movements all over Europe – but from the moment we take PSM as given, then scrapping the license fee implies finding alternative resources to fund them. Hence, we decided to examine various scenarios, with a constant budget, that we will describe in detail before presenting the results of our survey.

Direct government funding

Let us start with the solution that will probably prevail in France in the coming years¹, and which also seems to be favored by the Conservatives in the UK: direct government funding. Under this model, the annual budget bill would include a vote on the amounts to be devoted to the public broadcasting service. Such a solution poses a number of significant threats to PSM.

The dangers of direct government funding: a lack of resources and visibility

The first threat posed by direct government funding is the volatility of PSM funding. The partisans of such reform often argue that direct government funding could be multi-year, which would guarantee a degree of stability for the resources allocated to the public broadcasting service. De facto, multi-year budget programming is a common practice, often used to safeguard spending trajectories. In France, for example, this was recently the case with the “Research Planning Act” (*loi de programmation de la recherche*) for the years 2021 to 2030, which was passed in December 2020 (therefore covering a timeframe of 10 years).

So why not use a similar tool to fund the broadcasting service? First of all, it is important to stress that, even within the framework of budgetary programming, the basic principle is always budget annuality. In other words, a vote by MPs in a given year can never completely tie the hands of MPs in the following years, even if there is no change in majority. Admittedly, voting for a spending trajectory entails greater commitment than for an annual renegotiation, but it cannot – if the Parliament so decides – prevent such a renegotiation. In other words, budgetary programming is more a case of political display than binding legislation.²

1. The French situation has been made particularly complicated by the government’s unpreparedness, in particular the fact that nobody (even government members) expected Emmanuel Macron to announce the scrapping of the license fee. The preferred solution that was initially discussed by the MPs was direct government funding. However, given that the independence of public broadcasters is a constitutional principle in France, the government backed down at the very last minute, afraid that its reform would be deemed unconstitutional, and thus decided to fund public broadcasters until 2024 by using a fraction of VAT. However, for complex reasons linked to a public finance management reform in France, VAT funding would not be possible from 2024, and there will probably be a return to direct government funding.

2. Of course, the ease with which a multi-year budgetary commitment can be reversed varies according to the political organization of each country. Hence it seems to be much easier in a country like France – with a single-party majority government – than in a country like Denmark, due to existing parliamentary norms such as the *forligsinstitutionen* (conciliation institution) that ensure that every party can veto any change in broad-based multi-year compromises until the period covered by the compromise has finished (I thank Rasmus Nielsen for a very interesting discussion on the Danish model).

We could argue that the same applies to an earmarked tax, including the license fee, the amount of which can be modified in the Budget Act; this was in fact the case in France in 2019 (in the 2020 Budget Act¹). However, modifying the amount of an earmarked tax is far more visible – and thus more complicated – than a trajectory change in a multi-year programming act. Above all, budgetary planning is far more susceptible to changes in macro-economic trends, beginning with inflation. Let us take the example of the aforementioned French “Research Planning Act” announced at the end of 2020: owing to the current inflation trajectory, increased spending forecasts in fact become negative. On the other hand, an earmarked tax that is proportional to income, along the lines of the model we will be discussing, does not encounter this problem given that the tax basis usually progresses in line with the country’s income.

We must here stress that the inflation problem is anything but negligible, and that in recent years the license fee has already been eroded in many countries because of inflation. Whereas the General Tax Code in France states that the amounts of the license fee are indexed every year to the consumer price index (excluding tobacco), the Budget Acts for 2019, 2021 and 2022 did away with the automatic inflation indexing rule. Net license fee revenue thus fell by about 101 million euros in 2021. In the UK in 2022, the government cut the BBC’s funding by ordering a two-year freeze on the fee.

To put it another way, in many Western democracies today the public broadcasting service is already suffering from inadequate financial resources.² One example: the average annual number of “full time equivalent” staff at France Télévisions in France dropped from 10,490 in 2012 to 9,021 today. Similarly, throughout Macron’s first five-year presidential term, repeated cost-reduction plans were implemented at Radio France, leading to unprecedented job cuts. There is now concern that

direct government funding will further weaken the functioning of these institutions. In an “ordinary” economic context, with inflation of about 2% per year and actual economic growth of about 1% or 2% per year (above inflation), the public broadcasting allocation only needs to be under-indexed for one to two five-year presidential terms in order for budgets and editorial staff alike to be placed in serious difficulty. In today’s extraordinary economic context, with inflation exceeding 5% in 2022, the consequences of under-indexing can escalate alarmingly in just a few years.

Fewer resources for the broadcasting service means fewer resources to produce independent, high-quality information, hence the recurring discontent at France Télévisions and Radio France, as well as at the BBC. Pressure has indeed been ramped up in recent years, because the duties remain unchanged, whereas the workforce is constantly being cut back as a result of austerity measures imposed by the state, starting with the non-replacement of a very large number of retirements, but also voluntary redundancy schemes. Above all, fewer resources for the broadcasting service will have very real consequences for all citizens, because we will be less well informed as a result, which in turn will have further implications such as greater public disillusionment with the electoral process. Only an earmarked tax based on a sufficiently dynamic base, i.e. which progresses at least at the same rate as inflation and the country’s actual economic growth, can provide public broadcasting with credible guarantees.

The dangers of direct government funding: independence under threat

Most importantly, over and above the question of resources and their sustainability, direct government funding poses a major risk to the existence of public broadcasting: it threatens its independence.

1. The 2020 Budget Act reduced the license fee by one euro, which in itself led to a drop in revenue of 24 million euros.

2. Some countries have increased the license fee in recent years. In Austria, for example, the ORF’s Board of Trustees and Audience Council approved in 2021 a 8% increase in the license fee, which thus rose from 17.21 to 18.60 euros per household per month in 2022 (<https://www.publicmediaalliance.org/orf-new-leadership-a-licence-fee-increase-and-independence-concerns/>). But the general trend is downwards.

One of the preconditions for the independence of public broadcasting – although insufficient in and of itself – is the provision of lasting, multi-year funding that remains independent from the cycles of political majorities (i.e. an earmarked resource)¹. One of the aspects taken into account by “The Media for Democracy Monitor” (published by Nordicom) is therefore the fact of having PSM that are “*well and independently funded*” (under indicator F6 – “*Company rules against external influence in newsroom editorial staff*”). Why? Because “*when well and independently funded, [PSM] do not need to serve the demand of the current government*” (Nordicom 2021).

The *Governance and independence of public service media report* published by the European Broadcasting Observatory in February 2022 similarly highlights that “*independence and freedom of programming of PSM is also closely linked to the requirement that public service broadcasters can rely on an adequate funding system*”. Because it is earmarked revenue, in other words a resource that is stable, public and a guarantor of independence, the license fee “*remains one of the most viable options for public media, as demonstrated in its success and resilience over the decades*”². It particularly enables a healthy distance to be maintained between political power and the broadcasting services³. In a country such as Germany, the license fee is collected and managed by the public broadcasting channels themselves, in order to avoid any political interference – a model that many other countries should follow.

Putting an end to the license fee means that the spending allocated to broadcasting would have to be voted on each year – even in the case of a multi-year budget, as we have just seen – by the majority, thus rendering the PSM chairs subservient to the

government majority (of either side of the political spectrum). This runs contrary to all the guarantees of independence created in recent decades in many Western democracies. Some say that it is enough to simply ring-fence broadcasting spending in a multi-year budgetary framework, but what government will respect this when it has at its disposal such a simple means of exerting influence over media channels? For example, how can people be expected to believe President Macron of France when the so-called “goals and means contracts” (*contrats d’objectifs et de moyens* – COM) signed by the government and the public service radio and television companies were not respected during his previous mandate?

Another example: when advertising was scrapped after 8 p.m. on French public television channels in 2009, the state promised to cover the financial burden of this “loss of revenue”. So what actually happened? Compensation was provided for a few years and then the matter was forgotten entirely, meaning that year on year, the broadcasters have fewer resources with which to keep the public informed (see e.g. Filistrucchi, Mangani, and Luini 2012).

Many economic and political science studies have shown that public funding of the media has regularly been used as a means of influence by the governments in place. This is in no way limited to public broadcasting funding! Public advertising, for example in newspapers, was thus used in Argentina to reduce the negative coverage of corruption scandals involving the government (DiTella and Franceschelli 2011). A recent study concerning Hungary showed the same use of advertising resources for the purposes of political influence (Szeidl and Szucs 2021).⁴ As noted by Attila Batorfy and Agnes Urban, also on the case of Hungary, “*State*

1. Another precondition being its governance. As highlighted in Nissen (2016), who was Director General of The Danish Broadcasting Corporation between 1994 and 2004 before been dismissed “*after a prolonged conflict with the DR board of governors*”: “*although the principles of editorial independence and keeping an “arm’s length distance” between government and PSM institutions is widely supported in rhetorical terms, these are often disregarded in*

1. “Cited in Public Media Alliance, *BBC funding freeze: the importance of a licence fee*, January 18, 2022.

3. “*The licence fee provides a crucial link between public media and the public who fund them. It helps to ensure that public broadcasters are accountable. Stable and independent public funding ideally means that public media can maintain a healthy distance from the state and can hold power to account without fear of direct financial reprisals.*”, cited in Public Media Alliance, *op. cit.*, January 18, 2022.

4. Regarding these questions, also see Anya Schiffrin (ed.), *Media Capture. How Money, Digital Platforms, and Governments Control the News*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2021.

advertising is a powerful tool of political favouritism as well as an instrument of market distortion, censorship and building an uncritical media empire aligned with the government. This practice can be viewed as part of a broader set of instruments deployed by illiberal states and hybrid political regimes to consolidate their hold on power".¹ This is yet another reason to retain a resource earmarked for funding public broadcasting in our so-called liberal democracies – particularly as it has clearly been proven that the existence of such a resource enhances the independence of public media (see in particular Klimkiewicz 2015).

An earmarked and fair funding of PSM

An earmarked resource *does not* necessarily mean the license fee, only the license fee and nothing but the license fee. This idea has been wrongly put forward during a number of debates on the financing of PSM. The license fee as it currently stands is limited in many ways, as we have described.

For this study, we decided to consider a number of alternative scenarios, and to question the French population on each one. In particular, we envisaged three public funding methods other than the license fee, which could involve a resource earmarked for funding public broadcasting. These three methods are inspired by recent international experiments that would appear to be working relatively well:

- replacing the license fee with a contribution that is proportional to income;
- replacing the license fee with a progressive contribution according to income;
- replacing the license fee with a progressive contribution paid both by households and by companies.

In all three cases, the party liable for the tax could be either the household in the fiscal sense of the term – as for income tax – or the individuals, depending on the fiscal system in place in the different countries.

An earmarked contribution proportional to income

The first solution is inspired by what is being done in Sweden, which in 2019 replaced the license fee with a “public service tax” equal to 1% of the taxable income of all individuals aged 18 and over and with a taxable income. The amount of this tax is capped at 1,347 Swedish krona (SEK), or about 126 euros per year. Before this tax was implemented, the license fee was 2,400 SEK (225 euros) per year and per taxable household (whereas today it applies to individuals) in Sweden. The amount of the new tax has therefore been reduced for the lower income households, while increasing the financial resources for public broadcasting.

This tax is directly collected with the income tax, but remains clearly earmarked for funding public broadcasting – in the same way as the license fee before it. It is not paid into the government’s general budget, but is allocated to a “public service account” managed by the Swedish National Debt Office. The existence of this public service account was key to the success of the reform (as the recent blow to the new system in Norway remind us by contrast – see below). An alternative solution – which we briefly highlighted earlier – could be the German system where the license fee is collected directly by the public channels agency (*Beitragsservice von ARD, ZDL und Deutschlandradio*). This agency is entirely controlled by the channels themselves so as to ensure that the public broadcasting service remains fully independent from the government².

1. Cited in Bátorfy and Urbán (2020).

2. It should also be noted that in Germany, the amount of the license fee is decided on and approved by all the Länder governments, making any attempt to scrap it almost impossible. Furthermore, the Constitutional Court requires that the amount of the license fee be high enough to guarantee that the public channels can correctly perform their duty as a public information service.

What shape could such a measure take in France? The license fee brought in 3.14 billion euros in 2022; when compared with the total amount of declared income (1,238 billion in 2020), the license fee could be replaced by a 0.25% tax on all income. Such a measure would mean a significant increase in purchasing power for all households earning less than 4,500 euros per month (or about 35 million taxable households) and an additional effort only for the others (fewer than 5 million). The average amount paid by the 8.9 million taxable households with a reference tax income of between 0 and 10,000 euros would, for example, be less than 10 euros after the reform, as opposed to 138 today.

As in Sweden, we could of course also envisage a maximum amount for a public service tax, for example 200 euros per taxable household and per year. This would, however, mean increasing the tax rate, which would limit the redistributive impact of the reform accordingly. It is therefore very important that an informed and calm public debate be held. The amounts allocated to funding public broadcasting could be managed by an independent organization, as in Sweden.

A tax higher than 0.25% could also be envisioned in France, if we were willing to increase the public funding of PSM consistently with what we observe in other countries. For example, the 210 euros annual license fee in Germany corresponds approximately to 0.6% of the average household income.

An earmarked progressive contribution according to income

The second solution is inspired by Norway, which in 2020 replaced its license fee with a progressive income tax. As in Sweden, this tax is individual (and not per taxable household¹) and can be broken down as follows:

- 100 Norwegian Kroner (NOK) (9.58 euros) for individuals with an annual income of less than 150,000 NOK (14,372 euros);

- 900 NOK (86.2 euros) for individuals with an annual income between 150,000 and 200,000 NOK (19,162 euros);
- 1400 NOK (134.1 euros) for individuals with an annual income between 200,000 and 250,000 NOK (23,953 euros);
- 1,600 NOK (153.3 euros) for individuals with an annual income between 250,000 and 350,000 NOK (33,534 euros);
- 1,700 NOK (162.9 euros) for individuals with an annual income higher than 350,000 NOK.

By comparison, before the reform, the amount of the license fee was 3,038.56 NOK, or 291.1 euros per taxable household, per year. The reform thus led to a significant reduction in the amounts paid by the less well-off households, offset by an increase for the better-off individuals, while maintaining equivalent resources for the public broadcasting system (5,727 million NOK in 2020, or 549 million euros, which when calculated for the population as a whole represents about 102 euros per person).

How could such a measure be applied in other countries? If we consider the case of France and use the current revenue from the license fee (3.14 billion euros), we could imagine the following collection structure:

- 10 euros for taxable households with a fiscal income between 0 and 15,000 euros;
- 50 euros for taxable households with a fiscal income between 15,000 and 20,000 euros;
- 100 euros for taxable households with a fiscal income between 20,000 and 30,000 euros;
- 120 euros for taxable households with a fiscal income between 30,000 and 50,000 euros;
- 200 euros for taxable households with a fiscal income higher than 50,000 euros.

Here again, this kind of reform would result in an increase in purchasing power for more than 85% of taxable households. And once again, the exact amounts per tax bracket must first of all be the subject of an informed debate in Parliament.

However, it should be noted that, compared to the Swedish model, the Norwegian one suffers from two

1. Which was the case of the license fee before the 2019 reform.

important limitations. First, the amount of the tax is defined in Norwegian Kroner and not as a share of the income. Hence, the issue of the revaluation of this tax, particularly in times of high inflation (as we already noted, such a question does not arise when considering income shares given overall, total incomes increase at the same rate as inflation). A solution could be to introduce an automatic annual index raise, but the case of France reminds us that governments can easily decide to reverse this automatic indexation. Similarly in Finland, while an automatic annual index raise was introduced in 2013, the index raise was granted only once in the first year (see e.g. Karppinen and Ala-Fossi 2017).

Second, there is no such thing in Norway as the Swedish “public service account” where the tax is deposited and managed by the Swedish National Debt Office. Hence, despite the existence of an earmarked contribution to finance the PSM, the Norwegian government’s proposal for the 2023 state budget was several tens of millions of euros less than what the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) management envisioned when it drew up its own 2023 budget.¹ Hence, NRK had no choice but to open the door for employees to apply for voluntary severance pay.

An earmarked progressive contribution paid by both households and companies

Finally, the third solution could be to have the cost of public broadcasting borne not only by households, but also by companies which – for equivalent revenues – would enable the amount of the contribution from households to be brought down.

This was the choice made by Finland in 2013, when it replaced its license fee with a tax equal to 0.68% of the gross annual income of taxpayers aged 18 and over. Taxpayers with income of less than 10,300² euros are exempt from this tax and its

amount is capped at 143 euros per year for individuals whose income exceeds 20,588 euros. One Finnish particularity is that the funding of broadcasting is not borne only by households: companies, legal persons, cooperatives, municipalities, savings funds, investment funds and foundations must also pay a tax which goes to funding public broadcasting; if any of these entities has taxable income in excess of 50,000 euros, the amount of the tax is 140 euros per year, plus 0.35% of the taxable income above 50,000 euros (although the maximum amount of the tax due is capped at 3,000 euros).

As in Sweden and Norway, which used different models, this reform increased broadcasting revenue while lowering the amounts paid by the vast majority of households, because prior to the reform all the taxable households owning a television set had to pay a license fee of 252.25 euros per year. Public broadcasting funding is no longer an issue; by making it more equitable, these reforms have also made it more acceptable.

Alternative proposals

Of course, while the focus of this work is mainly on direct government funding on the one hand, and on an earmarked proportional or progressive contribution on the other hand – given that these are the solutions recently implemented in countries that have reformed their license fee – other solutions have also been considered, in particular in the British context of BBC funding. One is the introduction of a universal levy on broadband subscriptions, or any funding model linked directly to an existing common household bill such as the internet or council tax – in the spirit of what has been done in Italy, for example, where, since 2015, the license fee is incorporated into the electricity bill.

A second proposal that is part of the public discussion is part-privatization of PSM. This solution

1. See e.g. <https://journalisten.no/nrk-apner-for-sluttpakke-til-alle-ansatte/546629>.

2. The threshold was 7,352.95 euros when it was introduced in 2013.

has a certain logic to it: people who oppose PSM are willing to privatize it and thus to scrap the license fee. As should be clear from this report, we do not think that this is the right way to proceed. High-quality PSM is indeed a cornerstone of a high-quality democracy.

Finally, some people argue in favor of a subscription service. This seems illogical to us given that it goes against the very principles of PSM. The idea of public broadcasters is that everyone contributes to the production and provision of information as a public good and can access it for free – even (and perhaps especially) if she cannot afford to pay for it. Public TV (and likewise for radio) is not private TV, nor is it Netflix! (For that matter, there is most often no or very little advertising on PSM). Would we agree to make people pay a “subscription” for their children to attend public schools? For this reason, we do not think that even part of the content produced by the BBC should be put behind a paywall, and more generally that PSM could be funded through subscriptions.

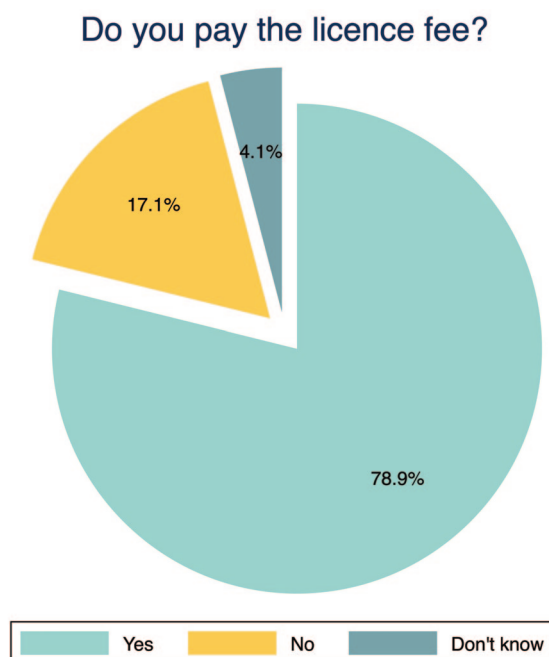
The results of the survey

During the twelfth wave of the “French electoral survey” conducted from June 3-6, 2022 on a sample of 10,826 people representative of the French population, we questioned the French public about their preferences regarding these various scenarios.

Who pays the license fee?

To start with, we asked respondents if they paid the license fee (Figure 1)¹. 78.9% of them said yes. It should be remembered that, before the 2022 reform in France, 27.61 million households were subject to this fee, of which 22.89, owing to exemptions, actually paid it, i.e. 82.9% of households. The two figures would thus appear to be consistent, indicating that the individuals questioned are relatively well informed on this subject.

Figure 1



1. “The ‘public broadcasting contribution’, or license fee, currently standing at 138 euros per year and per household, currently finances all public television and radio (France Télévisions, Radio France, Arte, etc.). Do you pay the license fee?”

Unsurprisingly, the younger generation is less likely to own a television set than their elders, a proportion which varies with age; whereas more than 82% of respondents over the age of 35 said that they paid the license fee, this figure is only 47.6% among those aged 18-24, and 74.4% among those aged 25-34 (Figure 2).

It can also be seen that fewer of the lower income respondents say that they pay the license fee;

40.1% of those for whom the household's net monthly income is below 1,250 euros claim to pay it (Figure 3). This can be partly explained by the system of exemptions: for example, in certain conditions those receiving the elderly person's minimum allowance or the disabled adult's allowance were exempt from license fee payment before the 2022 reform¹.

Figure 2

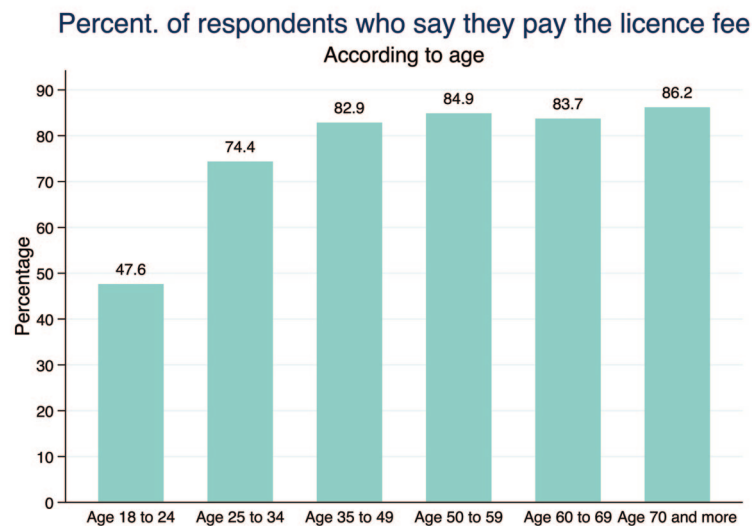
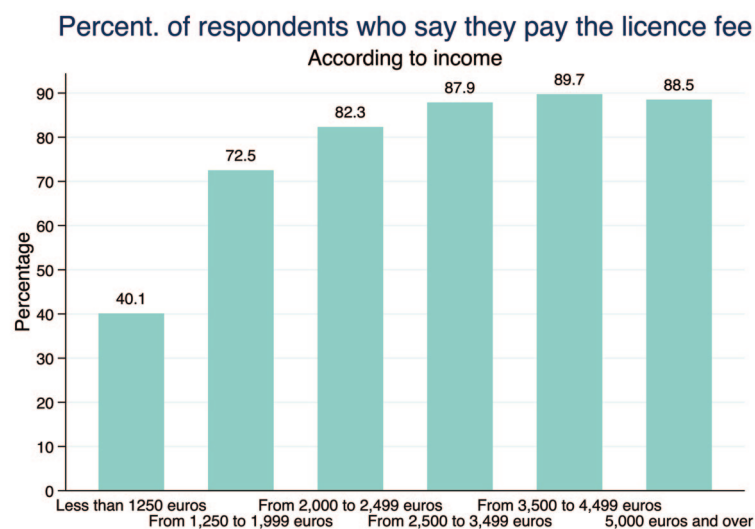


Figure 3



1. www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F88.

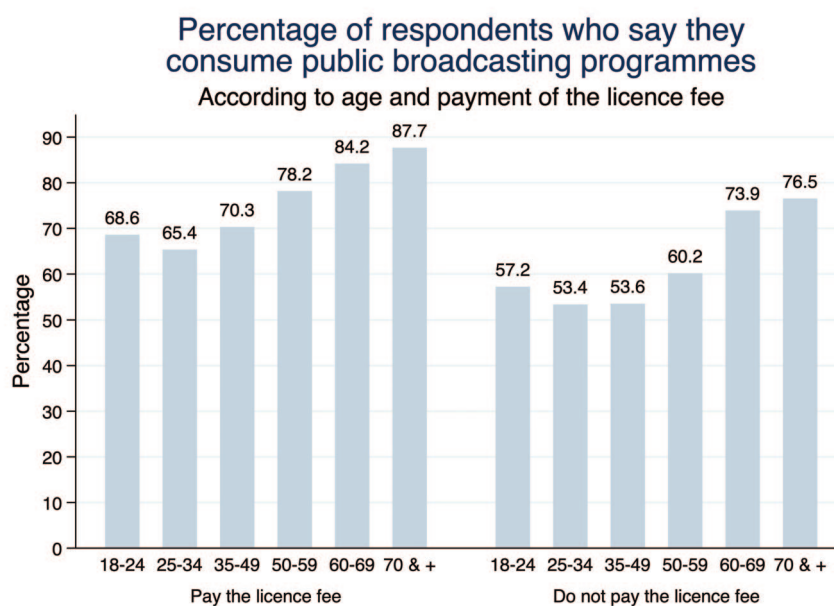
Who watches public television or listens to public radio?

Is there a correlation between the fact of paying the license fee and watching television or listening to public radio? We questioned surveyed individuals about their consumption habits¹. 73.5% of those questioned said that they watched or listened to public broadcasting programs in recent months. This figure is slightly lower than in other surveys; according to the “Appendix to the 2020 budget settlement and accounts approval Act, program 841” (France Télévisions), the France Télévisions group

reaches an average of 81% of the population every week, irrespective of the type of screen, or nearly 49 million people².

Whereas only 47.6% of those aged 18-24 claim to pay the license fee, 62.4% of these (or 15 points higher) say that they consumed broadcast programs in recent months (Figure 4). However, it should be noted that as payment of the license fee in France was linked to ownership of a television set, the percentage of respondents within each age bracket who say that they watch public television or listen to public radio is higher among those who say that they pay the license fee.

Figure 4



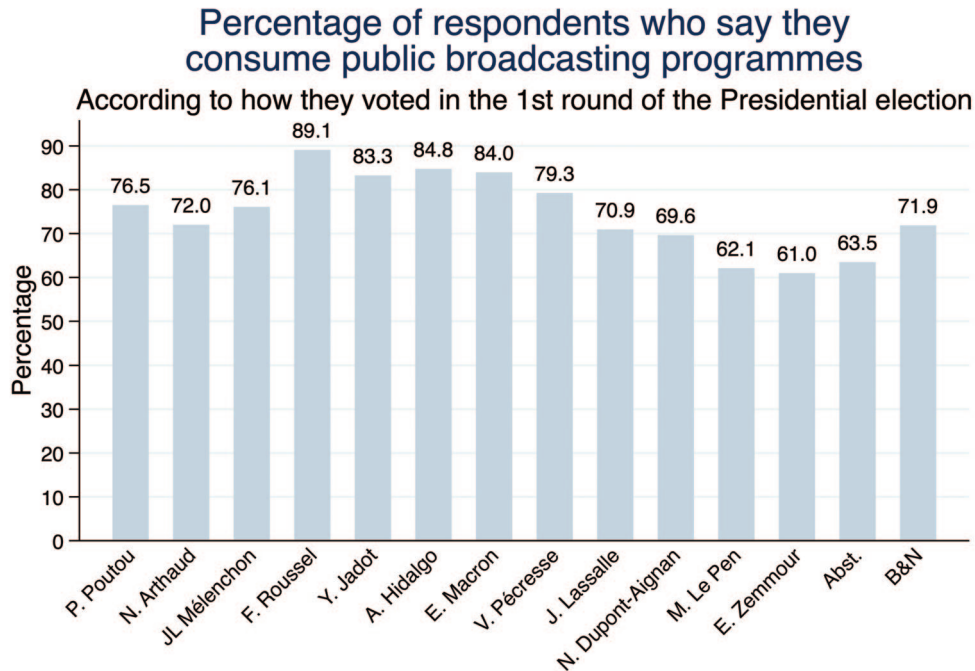
We can also see that the tendency to watch and/or listen to public broadcasting programs varies significantly according to political preferences, for example as measured by voting in the first round of the 2022 presidential elections (Figure 5). Whereas for the population as a whole, 73.5% of respondents said that they had consumed public broadcasting programs during the previous month, this figure stands at only 62.1% for those who voted for Marine Le Pen in the first round of the presidential elections,

and 61% for those who voted for Éric Zemmour. Adjusting for the income and age of the respondents, we can see that voting for Nicolas Dupont-Aignan, Marine Le Pen or Éric Zemmour in the first round of the presidential elections is associated with a reduction in the probability of consuming public broadcasting programs of 10, 13 and 17 percentage points respectively – for a given income and age – whereas no statistically significant difference is observed with regard to the other candidates.

1. “Over the course of the last month, did you watch or listen to public broadcasting programs (France Télévision, Radio France, Arte, etc.)?”

2. The report is based primarily on Médiamétrie data for November 2020.

Figure 5



How does the French public want to see public broadcasting funding reformed?

Finally, we questioned the respondents about their perception of the license fee. To do so, as previously mentioned, we asked them the following question: In your opinion, for a constant budget, would it be preferable in the future:

- 1/ to keep the license fee in its current form (138 euros per year for all households regardless of their income);
- 2/ replace the license fee with a contribution of 0.25% proportional to income [or 30 euros per year for a household earning 1,000 euros per month and 300 euros per year for a household earning 10,000 euros per month];
- 3/ replace the license fee with a progressive income-based contribution [for example, 0% below 2,000 euros, 0.2% from 2,000 to 5,000 euros, 0.5% above 5,000 euros];
- 4/ replace the license fee with a progressive contribution paid both by households and by companies;

5/ replace the license fee with direct government funding, i.e. a contribution taken each year from the state's budget (therefore financed by taxes), as decided by the government and the parliamentary majority;

6/ no opinion.

Figure 6 presents the results from all respondents: 34.5% want to see a reform of the license fee in the form of a new earmarked contribution, well ahead of those who want to keep the license fee (16%) or replace it with direct government funding (20.6%). If we add together those in favor of keeping the license fee and those in favor of a proportional or progressive contribution, it is clear that the majority of the French population is in favor of earmarked funding of public broadcasting.

In the rest of our analysis, we will primarily focus on the respondents who expressed an opinion on the reform of public broadcasting funding (taking no account of those respondents who selected "no opinion" as their answer). 71% are in favor of maintaining an earmarked resource, whether it be the license fee (22.4%) or a new earmarked contribution (48.6%) (Figure 7).

Figure 6

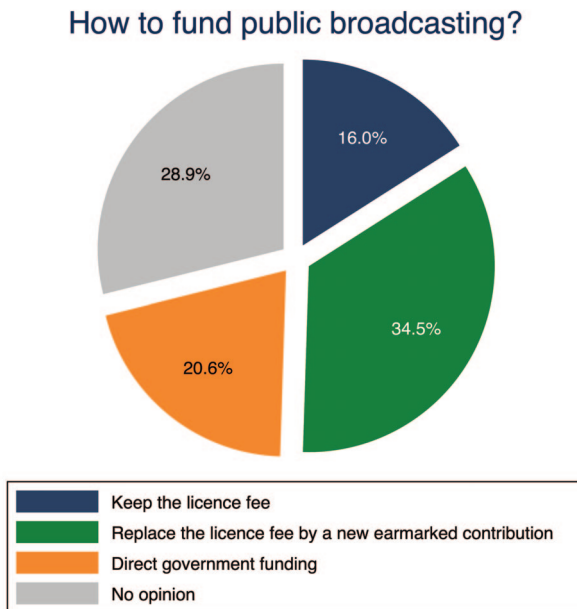
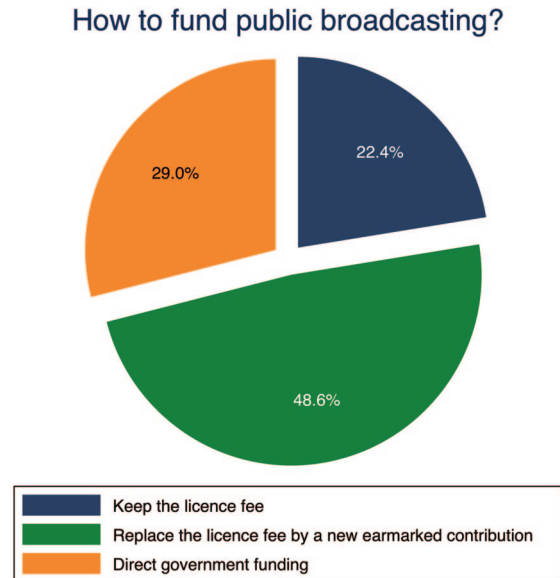


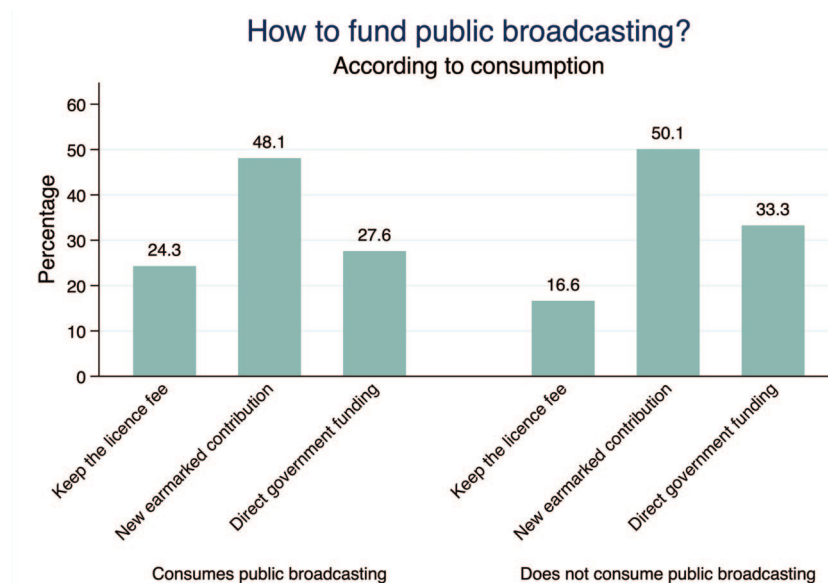
Figure 7



This percentage is slightly higher among the respondents who habitually listen to or watch public broadcasting programs (72.4%), than among those who do not (66.7%) (Figure 8). In both cases, only a very small minority favor the direct government funding solution.

The various reforms being envisaged are of course not neutral in fiscal terms: replacing the license fee by a contribution that is progressive or proportional to income would certainly represent an increase in spending power for the less well-off, but also a tax rise for the taxable households in the highest income

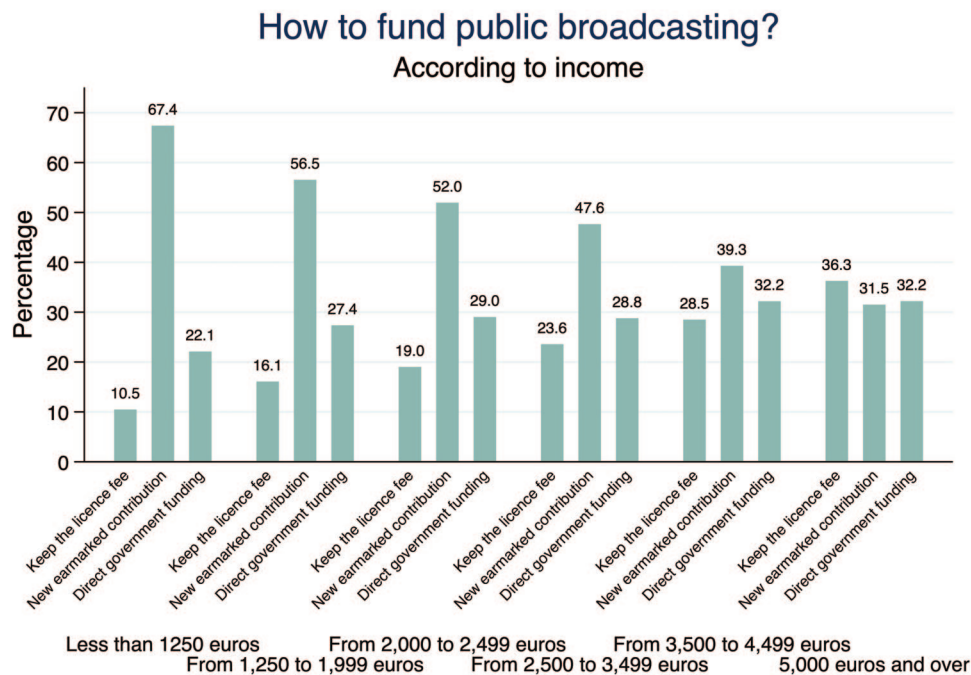
Figure 8



brackets. It is therefore interesting to see to what extent the public's preferences regarding the funding of public broadcasting varies according to their income. The results are striking (Figure 9): we can see that the percentage of respondents in favor of replacing the license fee with a progressive or proportional contribution, applicable to households alone and/or to households and companies, is 67.4% among the respondents for whom the household's net monthly income is below 1,250 euros, but only

31.5% among those whose income exceeds 5,000 euros. As we have seen, replacing the license fee with a proportional contribution of 0.25% on all incomes would represent an increase in purchasing power for all households with a net income of less than 4,500 euros, and a tax rise for all those earning more. It is clear that only those respondents with an income in excess of 5,000 euros are in favor of keeping the license fee rather than implementing a progressive contribution.

Figure 9



If we look in more detail at the potential form of this new contribution, we can see that the idea of replacing the license fee with a progressive contribution according to income is the most popular among the respondents with a monthly income of less than 5,000 euros (Figure 10). It is also supported by 36.9% of the respondents with an income of less than 1,250 euros, as opposed to 20.1% in favor of a proportional contribution, and 10.4% for a progressive contribution, but applicable to both households and companies. Overall, the Finnish solution (households plus companies) appears to be the least convincing for all the groups questioned.

The results according to age are also interesting: the popularity of direct government funding increases with age (21.9% support among those aged 18 to 24, as opposed to 33.8% among those aged 70 and over), but replacing the license fee with a fairer contribution is supported by the majority of those aged 18 to 49 (Figure 11). Support for keeping the license fee also increases with the age of the respondents, but this is partly due to the fact that the younger generations also have the lowest incomes.

Figure 10

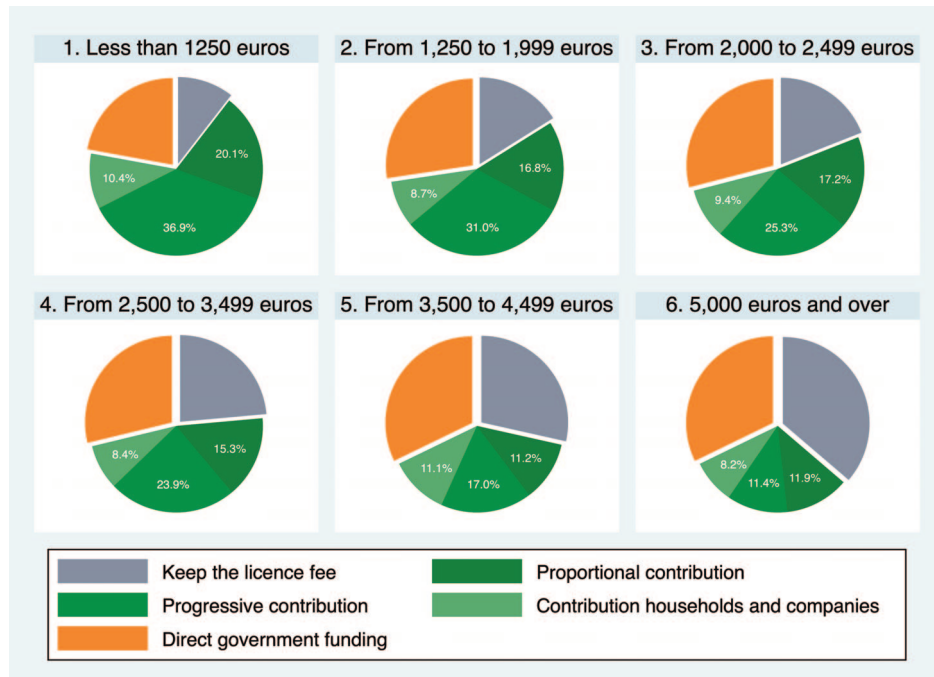
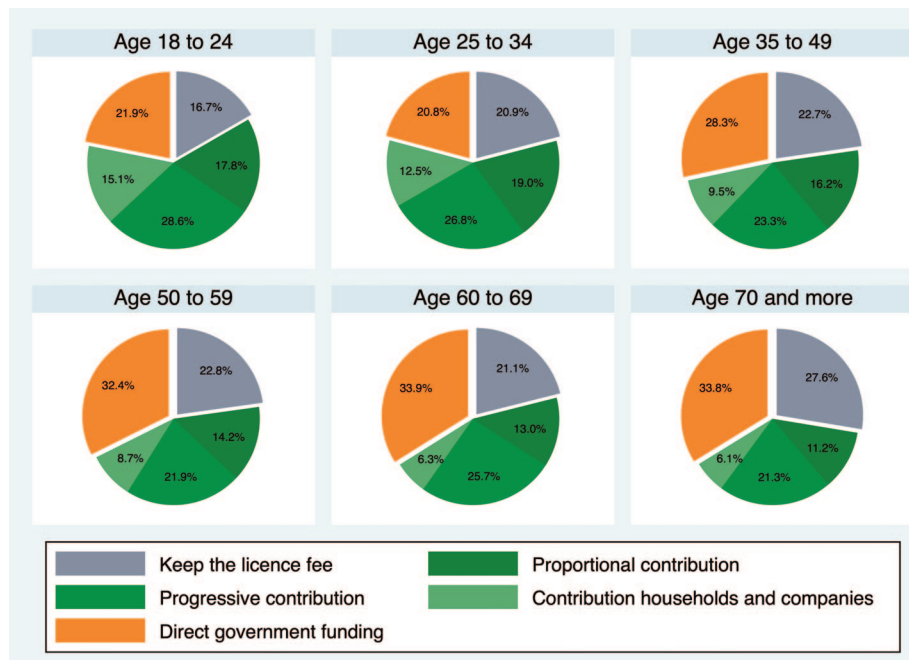


Figure 11



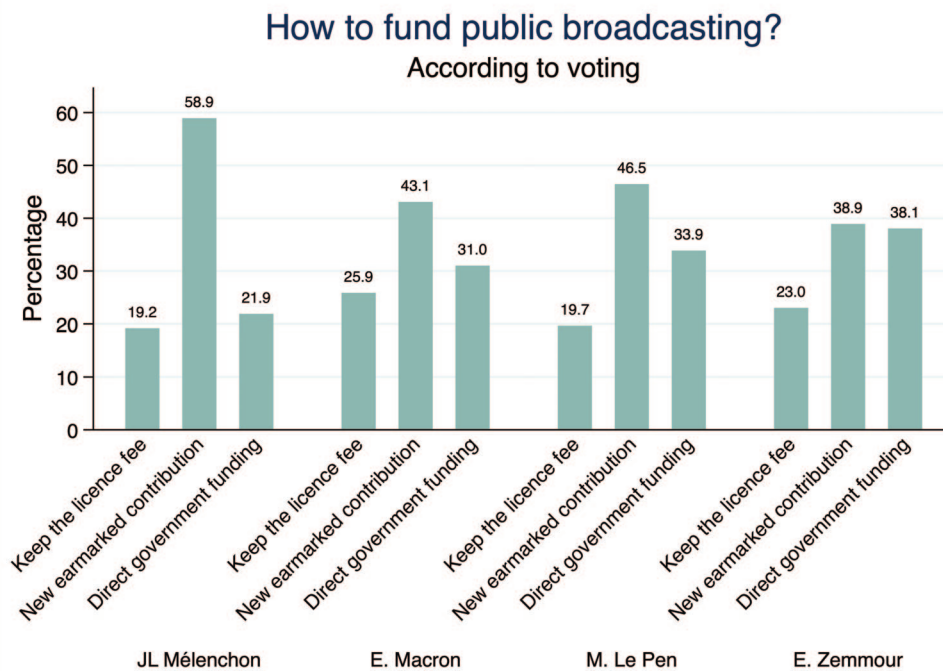
As we saw earlier, those who voted for Éric Zemmour, Marine Le Pen or Nicolas Dupont-Aignan are relatively less likely than other respondents to watch public television or listen to public radio. Do their preferences also differ when it comes to the funding of public broadcasting? If we focus on the four

candidates who were leading after the first round of the presidential elections, we can see that not only those who voted for Jean-Luc Mélenchon (58.9%), but also those who preferred Emmanuel Macron (43.1%) are very clearly in favor of replacing the license fee by a proportional or progressive

contribution based on income. Even if direct government funding is more popular with Emmanuel Macron voters (31%) than with those of Jean-Luc Mélenchon (21.9%), it is above all the voters of Marine Le Pen and Éric Zemmour who are by far the

most in favor, with 33.9% and 38.1% of the voters respectively defending it. This is not particularly reassuring when one considers the risks that such a system of funding could pose in terms of independence.

Figure 12



Finally, we questioned the French population about their perception of the reform being proposed at the time – and then implemented – by Emmanuel Macron, and we asked them in particular whether they considered that scrapping the license fee was likely to constitute a threat to the independence of public broadcasting. Although 20.5% of the respondents said that they did not know if this would be the case, 31.7% of them expressed concern about independence. Even if this figure might seem low, it should be compared with the fact that overall – and even before any reform of public broadcasting – confidence in the media is already very low in France, as is reiterated every year by the media barometer published by *La Croix*¹ newspaper.

Interestingly, we can see that the perception of the potential risk to broadcasting independence from direct government funding varies significantly with political preference. In particular, whereas the majority of those who voted for one of the six left-wing candidates in the first round of the presidential election believe that such a risk exists (for example 66.7% of those who voted for Yannick Jadot and 56.3% of those who voted for Jean-Luc Mélenchon), the curve is completely reversed with the center-right to extreme-right voters (Figure 13)². Only 37.7% of Emmanuel Macron's voters and only 20.4% of those of Éric Zemmour believe that scrapping the license fee constitutes a risk for the independence of public broadcasting.

1. According to the 35th Kantar-Onepoint media trust barometer for *La Croix* published at the beginning of the year, the French population expressed no majority trust in any media.

2. Here we focus on the respondents who answered “yes” or “no” to the question.

In short, while citizens who are concerned about the independence of broadcasting are more in favor of keeping the license fee (35.1%) than of direct government funding (13.4%), contrary to those who do not perceive a threat (13.3 and 41.9%

respectively), we can see that an earmarked contribution, but one that is more equitable, nonetheless remains by far the preferred solution in both cases (Figure 14).

Figure 13

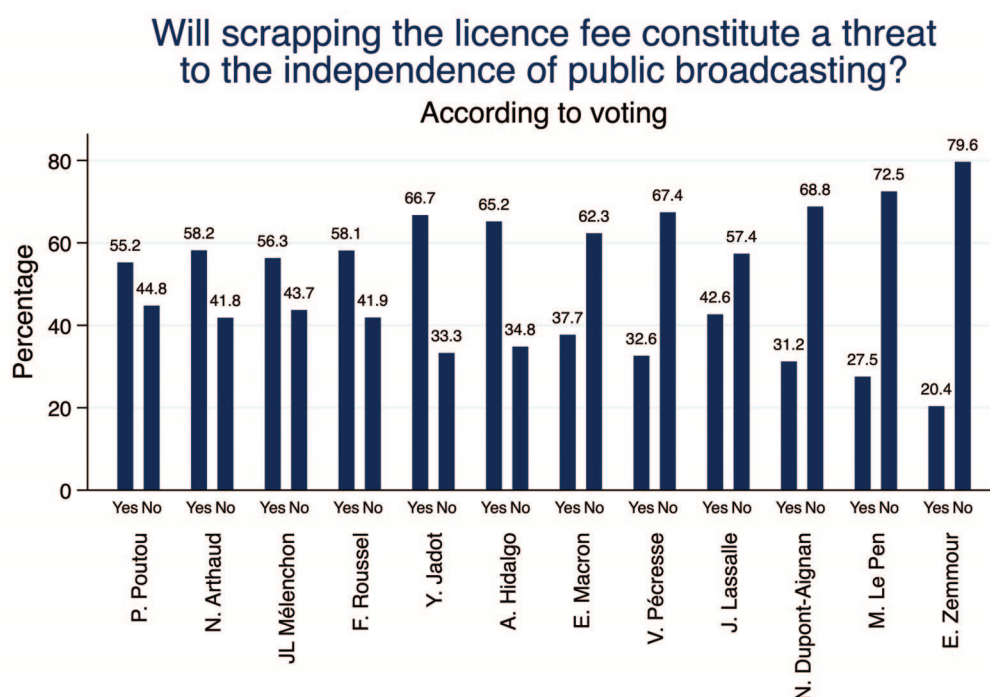
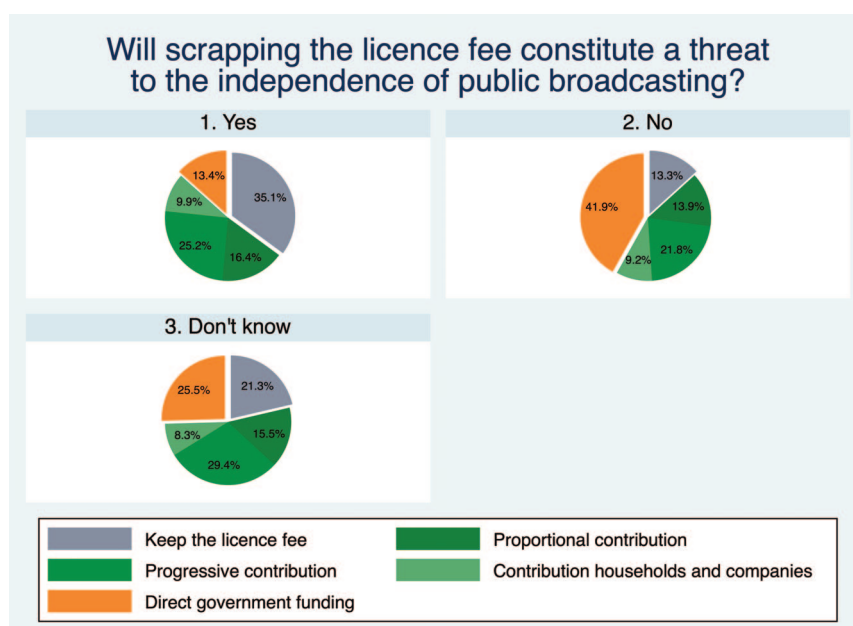


Figure 14



Conclusion

Achieving high-quality public broadcasting

Numerous studies have shown that those countries in which public broadcasting is best funded have a high-quality democracy (see e.g. Benton 2022). Neff and Pickard (2021) note that public media ensure that the citizens are better informed of public affairs, reduce information inequality and generate more diversified and more critical news coverage, in particular when adequately funded and protected from all political interference³⁵. While private media are being weakened by growing concentration and a downward trend in the advertising market (see e.g. Cagé and Huet 2021), scrapping the license fee today would be both a historical mistake and an error in diagnosis.

We think that the best way to have a well-funded, independent PSM is to introduce earmarked funding paid by all citizens but in a progressive way (i.e. the poor contribute less than the rich). The resources generated from this tax should be managed entirely independently of the government – following either the German system where the license fee is collected and managed by the public broadcasting channels, or the Swedish example, where the collected tax is allocated to a public service account managed by the Swedish National Debt Office – in order to fully isolate the PSM from the state. We also think that the earmarked contribution should be defined as a share of the households' or individuals' income rather than in euros, so that it is not gradually eroded by

inflation (alternatively, an automatic annual index raise could be introduced, but as we saw, such a solution seems to be less sustainable). Interestingly, the results of our large-scale survey show that – at least in France – people seem to be in favor of such a solution. We believe that we would most probably obtain comparable results if we were to perform similar surveys in other countries. Discussions on the funding of PSM are currently taking place in many countries, and we hope the results of this work will help to inform the debate not only in Western European countries but also in countries such as South Africa, where, in 2021, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) made proposals for a new possible public media funding model. Once again, its main concern was limiting government interference.³⁶

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that, even in the Netflix era, television (and even radio!) is still an essential medium of news consumption: a French TV viewer spends almost four hours in front of their TV set every day and television is still the main medium through which most people obtain information. According to the France Télévisions 2019 business report, 14.2 million viewers receive their daily news update from the France 2 and France 3 news broadcast, to whom must be added the viewers and listeners of France Info, France Inter and France Culture (three radio stations). The public information

35. See also Curran et al. (2009), and Powers (2018) who highlights that “while most public media see declining or stagnant revenues, the most admired and most popular (in terms of audience share) public media outlets remain some of the best funded”.

36. Of course, independent funding is not a sufficient condition of PSM independence, but it is a necessary one. Among other conditions, the conditions under which the head of the public service broadcaster is chosen is key (as recent concerns in Austria remind us – see e.g. <https://www.publicmediaalliance.org/orf-new-leadership-a-licence-fee-increase-and-independence-concerns/>) as well as the structure of the advisory boards.

service is by far the leading French medium. The success of PSM in France may well be linked to the existence of the license fee because, according to the previously mentioned European Union study on radio and television, the better the funding of public broadcasting (by the license fee), the greater the market share of the public broadcasting system.

What our survey clearly shows is that there is nothing to stop us from taking a fresh look at how public broadcasting is funded, quite the opposite! But reimagining this funding also means guaranteeing lasting resources that are independent of political cycles. The best means of doing this – and indeed the most popular – is to implement an earmarked resource. Here we should reiterate the fact that, in a country like France, this type of reform would lead to a gain in purchasing power for more than 85% of taxable households.

It goes without saying that the aim of this report is by no means to close the debate, but to underline the fact that there are several options and that the idea of replacing the license fee with a more equitable earmarked contribution would appear to enjoy widespread public support, well ahead of the direct public funding solution. We also want to insist on the fact that, most often, it is nearly impossible to reverse

such a reform once it has been implemented.¹ It is therefore very important to be aware of the consequences of such a reform. Some will say that not all the solutions have been envisaged here; in the public debate, other options have indeed been discussed in recent years, such as a tax on the purchase of multimedia devices. However, such a tax would in no way guarantee the stability of broadcasting funding. Others support the principle of a tax on telecom operators – as in Spain – or on streaming platforms such as Netflix or Amazon Prime. Beyond the question of sustainability, however, this also raises the question of incentive, because the health of the public broadcasting system would then depend on the health of Netflix, HBO Max, etc., which are in fact its direct competitors! We should underline another advantage of direct funding by households: it creates strong ties between the public and public broadcasting. Hence our argument in favor of what could be called a “public service contribution”, or “public broadcasting contribution”. At a time when fake news is everywhere and inflation is eroding budgets, it is essential to make funding transparent and to share responsibility for the burden equally, as several Nordic countries have successfully done over the past decade. Another license fee is possible!

1. This can clearly be seen from the case of Denmark; in the epilogue of his very interesting study of the reform, Nissen (2018a) notes that “a year after the media agreement had been concluded, a general election brought down the Liberal led government and a new minority government led by the Social Democratic party took office (...) with support from the center-left parties. One of the points in the ‘document of understanding’ forming the basis of the alliance, was a cancelation of the 2018 media agreement and an announcement, that the government would invite all parties to deliberations in order to “strengthen Danish public service”. Apparently not an urgent matter, because these meetings have so far (June 2020) not begun.”

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