

'Approval' clause in Broadcasting Bill could be scrapped

The African National Congress is looking at scrapping the controversial clauses in the Broadcasting Amendment Bill that call for ministerial "approval" of the SABC's editorial policies.

The bill has been strongly criticised by media organisations, with the two most senior heads of SABC news saying that they were "perturbed" by its implications.

Last week the ANC National Executive Committee's media sub-committee held two meetings to discuss the bill and set guidelines for dealing with it. Included in the sub-committee are Essop Pahad, minister in the office of the presidency, and MPs Nkenke Kekana, Pallo Jordan and Jeremy Cronin. Individual clauses of the bill were not discussed, but key principles in the guidelines that were set are that the SABC should enjoy freedom of expression and that its programme makers should have editorial independence.

After a meeting between communications minister Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri and SABC chairman Vincent Maphai a statement was issued indicating the issue was in the process of being resolved, while Nkenke Kekana, chairman of the national assembly's communications committee, said that his committee would be holding hearings on the bill from September 16 to 20. A call has been made for written submissions from interested parties by September 13. He refused to comment on specific clauses in the bill but said that the ANC would be guided by the principles established at the meetings of the media sub-committee.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>