Barbara Thomass

**Public Service Media, Civil Society and Transparency**

A recent decision of the constitutional court in Germany may be regarded as seminal for public service media in general: The court ruled that the representation of politicians within the broadcasting council and administrative council of the ZDF (the second nationwide public service broadcaster in Germany) should be limited to one third with more representatives of civil society coming in, and that the councils should act with more transparency. Both parts of the decision touch on two crucial elements of public service media and their relation to society.

The contribution will discuss the role of civil society in modern democracies and look at how and with which benefit PSM can relate to it. Participation of civil society to PSM is regarded as a key element of their relevance in future. But European public service broadcasters as institutions are only in the beginning of their way to enhance their relation to civil society.

In the recent decade we observe an increase of the topic “transparency” in political discourse while “public sphere” is in decrease. The relation of both has to be clarified. The contribution will look at the value of transparency as one important instrumental element of democratic governance and how this is implemented by different European PSBs. The differences are eminent.

Thus, civil society and transparency are discussed in relation as normative orientations for public service media in Europe which gain increasing importance in discourses on media policy. They represent a further development of quality in democracy and communication rights.