

*"Working for quality
and diversity in
British broadcasting"*



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Mark Thompson content with the BBC's new settlement following 9-day negotiations which were "not too quick" and "not too tough".

VLV Members' voice concerns: "The devil will lie in the detail". The economy must not be a pretext for infringing the BBC's independence". "VLV will be vigilant".

Mark Thompson, BBC Director-General last night (24 November) made his first public speech since the announcement of the new licence fee settlement at Voice of the Listener & Viewer's autumn conference '*Broadcasting where are we going?*'

Mr Thompson said that he had been the lead negotiator for the BBC but that the proposals had been endorsed by the BBC Trust. The BBC felt they could live with the proposed strategy and the 16% cut in BBC income over the next six years and emerge stronger. The negotiations lasted nine days, Mark Thompson said that, although he regretted the inability to consult licence payers, his feeling was that the BBC had secured a better deal than if they had waited – as previously anticipated – for a decision in spring 2011.

Commenting, VLV Honorary President Jocelyn Hay said :

"VLV members were assured by Mark Thompson that the diversity of public service broadcasting is to be retained but much has still to be decided and the devil will lie in the detail. "Our members", she added, "are concerned that the summary nature of the decisions – and indeed the proposals themselves – fly in the face of safeguards which had been built into legislation over many years. Whilst we accept that all public bodies must bear their share of cuts at this time, the state of the economy must not be used as a pretext for infringing the BBC's independence. VLV will be vigilant in working to ensure this does not happen".

Jocelyn Hay added: "We are equally concerned at threats contained in the Comprehensive Spending Review that could endanger the independent status and remit of Channel 4, as well as the independence and authority of the media regulator Ofcom. Any threat to the independence of these institutions would undermine the integrity and essential democratic nature of British culture, governance and citizenship."

End

Editors Note

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Voice of the Listener & Viewer (VLV) is an independent, not-for-profit association, free from political, commercial and sectarian affiliations, working for quality and diversity in British broadcasting. VLV represents the interests of listeners, viewers and increasingly new media users, as citizens and consumers across the full range of broadcasting issues. VLV supports the principles of public service