

Public Broadcasting in Germany and its Editor's Charter

ABSTRACT

This report introduces readers to the Editor's Charter for German broadcasters. In 1969, the Westdeutscher Rundfunk in Cologne began the movement to increase participation of broadcast journalists in policy-adopting processes. In the movement, the broadcasters adopted the Editor's Charter in order to expand their 'inner press freedom' or professional independence. Later, the Editor's Charter was successfully adopted in the broadcast law for the Westdeutscher Rundfunk and the Norddeutscher Rundfunk.

This report examines views regarding broadcasters' freedom and responsibilities that emerged from the Editor's Charter and other related provisions in the broadcast law. The paragraphs describing the Editor's Charter, especially the paragraph on the issue of personal conscience, may be particularly interesting to Japanese researchers. This paragraph states, "No editorial staff member under any circumstances shall be forced to act against his own conviction in discharging their editorial responsibility."

In Japan, there is a great deal of discussion on the freedoms and responsibilities of journalists; however, it seems there is a lack of understanding of the journalist's freedom of conscience which I believe should form the basis of journalist ethics. The Editor's Charter, which describes the concept of freedom of conscience, is pertinent material for people in Japan to further consideration concerning the freedoms and responsibilities of journalists.

Key Words : freedoms and responsibilities of jourualists, Editor's charter,
inner press freedom.