



Vlaamse Radio- en Televisieomroep

## **Ex ante test in the Flemish community**

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## Growing interference European Commission in PSB sector on the basis of State aid control

- » VRT and other PSB have raised competence issues throughout the revision of the Broadcasting communication
  - “control for manifest error”
  - “ex ante test” (including public consultation of competitors and MIA) and other supervisory bodies

# Ex ante test in Flanders

- What VRT should offer as PSB = political decision
- Final aim Flemish government = good PSB service for a wide Flemish audience
- Before the EC decision
  - Informal consultation or lobbying by different stakeholders + discussion at political level
  - In 2006 more formalised : Public consultation and academic report on future rol of VRT
  - Mid-term evaluation foreseen in current management agreement including the criteria for assesment
    - Economic situation Flemish media landscape
    - General media offer in Flanders
    - Technological evolutions
    - International tendencies
    - Protection and promotion of Flemish culture and identity
    - Expectations and needs of media consumer

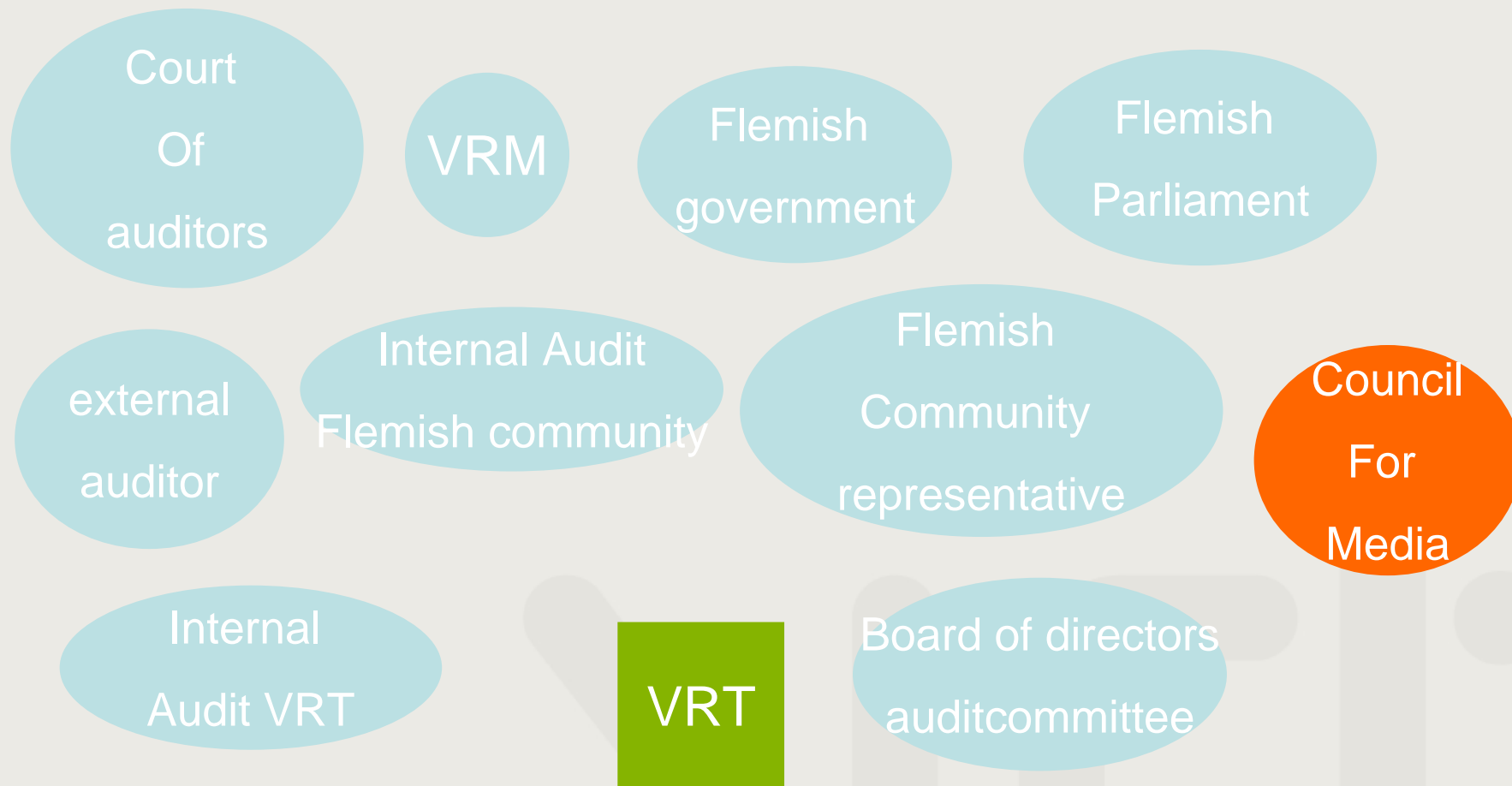
# Ex ante test in Flanders

- ⇒ As part of the appropriate measures the Flemish government agrees to introduce two ex ante tests:
  - Before each management agreement
  - During a management agreement if new significant services are added that are not covered by the management agreement
  - Criteria for evaluation were copied from the current management agreement
    - Economic situation Flemish media landscape
    - General media offer in Flanders
    - Technological evolutions
    - International tendencies
    - Protection and promotion of Flemish culture and identity
    - Expectations and needs of media consumer
  
- ⇒ Good PSB service for the Flemish audience still central idea of Flemish government

# Ex ante test in Flanders

- » Ex ante mechanism can help Flemish government to make well founded decision provided
  - objective well founded information and evaluation,
  - Need for rapid and flexibel procedure allowing PSB to adapt to new developments in the media
  - Editorial freedom PSB is fully respected
- » Possible positive consequences
  - greater legitimacy and less criticism on VRT remit
  - Work put into a clear and well founded definition should also lead to a correct financing (at the moment VRT seriously underfunded)
  - Possibility to adapt remit for new services not foreseen in management agreement with also correct financing
- » Concerns :
  - composition of the Council for the Media;
  - lack of funding of the Council for the Media

# Overview of different organs supervising VRT at national level



## Ex ante an additional administrative and costly burden upon Flemish community

- » Already impressive list of supervisory bodies
- » Ex ante additional administrative burden + cost
  - Initially 7 studies identified by Council for the Media for current on going ex ante test
  - In the end only 3 studies commissioned because of financial constraints → impact on quality of ex ante evaluation ?
- » What will happen if EC is confronted with complaint vis-à-vis a PSB service that has gone through ex ante testing ?