[LV] Parliament adopts amendments to the Electronic Mass Media Law

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On 22 October 2026, the Latvian parliament, the *Saeima*, adopted amendments to the Electronic Mass Media Law (Bill 1200/Lp14) at third reading, by 59 votes to 16, with no abstentions. The amendments concern broadcasting languages, music involving sanctioned persons, advertising and the powers of the National Electronic Mass Media Council (*Nacionālā elektronisko plašsaziņas līdzekļu padome* – NEPLP).

Radio broadcasting licences will only be issued for programmes in Latvian or another EU member state language from 21 July 2033. This extends the Latvian-only formulation approved at second reading. Holders of licences specifying other languages must request amendments by 21 November 2033; otherwise the NEPLP must cancel the licences from 21 January 2034. The revised radio-language provision also applies from that date. It requires foreign-language programmes or extracts to be translated into Latvian, with exceptions for language teaching, interactive live broadcasts, musical performances and live international cooperation programmes.

From 1 September 2027, films in the languages of other EU member states, European Economic Area states, EU candidate countries, Switzerland and member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as films in Livonian, must have Latvian voiceover, dubbing or subtitles. Films in other foreign languages require Latvian voiceover or dubbing. Children’s films must be dubbed or voiced over in Latvian. Exceptions cover retransmission, satellite broadcasts aimed at audiences who are not residents of Latvia and the public media cases specified in Section 8(3) and (4) of the public media governance law.

The same distinction between language groups and translation methods applies to television programmes or extracts, excluding live broadcasts, news and language teaching programmes. Retransmission and qualifying satellite services aimed at audiences who are not residents of Latvia remain exempt. A further exception permits individual foreign-language words or passages as artistic expression in Latvian-language films, series and theatrical performances, including extracts used in programmes, within the extent necessary for that purpose.

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A proposed requirement that election debates be conducted in Latvian, including its Latgalian written form, or Livonian was rejected at third reading.

Section 26(1)(10) prohibits, including in electronic-media programmes or broadcasts, musical works or extracts whose author or performer is subject to national or international sanctions. Exceptionally, their use is permitted where objectively necessary for a programme's documentary, informational, historical or analytical content, provided the purpose is not to promote the sanctioned person, support their activities or provide them with an economic benefit.

From 1 January 2027, advertising in programmes must be in Latvian, with exceptions for retransmission and qualifying satellite services targeting audiences who are not residents of Latvia. Other advertising amendments remove the ban on long-form advertising between 19:00 and 23:00 and the rule limiting split-screen advertising to one third of the screen. The requirement that its area remain fixed is also removed; identification and visual separation requirements remain.

The legislation replaces the reference to the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA) with the European Board for Media Services. It also provides that the NEPLP performs, within its competence, the national regulatory authority functions under the Law on the Press and Other Mass Media.

Grozījumi Elektronisko plašsaziņas līdzekļu likumā (1200/Lp14), 3.lasījums

https://titania.saeima.lv/LIVS14/saeimalivs2_dk.nsf/0/38B1C565EFCEB3C0C2258E99000AFDCD?OpenDocument

Amendments to the Electronic Mass Media Law (Bill 1200/Lp14), third reading

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