[DE] On-line Services from Public-Law Institutions - The Rules

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In late July, the Director of the ZDF (Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen), issued a policy directive on the structure and assessment of " ZDF.online", the on-line service which the station runs in co-operation with the American Microsoft company. The ZDF's on-line involvement has been criticised on several scores. Magazine and newspaper publishers object, above all, to the fact that its Internet pages also carry regional news and information, while private operators and programme organisers object to its deriving advertising revenue from the new on-line market (as a public-service channel, it gets most of its programme funding from licence fees). The policy directive tackles the problem of content and introduces voluntary self-regulation, of the kind already called for by the supervisory authority. Care is to be taken that on-line services help the ZDF to fulfil its programme function and do not carry material aimed at the regions. In particular, they are to provide background and extra information on programmes. That connection must be clearly indicated, and any links included must also serve directly to supplement, amplify or explain ZDF programmes.

Programmanordnung vom 20.7.1998: Vorschriften für die Gestaltung und Beurteilung von Online-Diensten, PrAO-53/98.

Policy directive of 20.7.1998: Regulations concerning structure and assessment of on-line services, PrAO-53/98.

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