[BE] Flemish-Speaking Community Further Alters Audiovisual Legislation

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The Parliament of the Flemish-speaking community has now reorganised the legal framework of private radio stations (Decree of 7 July, published in the Moniteur of 18 August 1998) This follows a number of related measures: the in-depth reorganisation of the legal framework of the public radio and television body (Decree of 29 April 1997, published in the Moniteur [official gazette] of 1 May 1997), the decree concerning the Flemish-speaking Media Commissariat and the Flemish-speaking Media Council (Decree of 17 December http://services.obs.coe.int/en/index.htm 1997, published in the Moniteur of 13 March 1998) (see IRIS 1998-1: 12 and IRIS 1997-10: 12), the decree regulating the right to the freedom of information and radio broadcasting of short news items (Decree of 17 March 1998, published in the Moniteur of 17 April 1998) (see IRIS 1998-4: 11) and the amendments to various aspects of audiovisual matters and cable distribution (Decree of 28 April 1998, published in the Moniteur of 20 May 1998) (see IRIS 1998-5:13). The new Article 29 of the Audiovisual Decree stipulates that each inhabitant of the Flemish-speaking Community should be able to receive a private radio station, either a local radio station or an urban radio station in the urban areas of Antwerp, Ghent and Brussels. The role of the private radio stations (which broadcast in the FM band) is to broadcast a range of information, culture and entertainment programmes with a view to promoting communication in their reception area. The private radio stations are open to the active participation of listeners and associations. The new Decree makes the possibilities for participating in cooperation structures more flexible and relaxes the requirements in terms of minimum quotas for own programming. Another new feature is cable radio, directed at the entire Flemishspeaking Community, broadcasting programmes exclusively by cable. All the existing authorisations for local radio stations will expire on 31 December. On the basis of a new frequency plan and a new procedure, the Media Commissariat for the Flemish-speaking Community has authority to grant new authorisations to private radio stations. It may also be mentioned that the Media Commissariat for the Flemish-speaking Community has meanwhile become operational and that the procedures the Commissariat is to follow have been fixed, including that of the authorisation of a private radio station and a cable radio broadcasting service (Decision of 14 July 1998, published in the Moniteur of 20 August 1998).

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Statutory instrument modifying other SI concerning Radio and Television Broadcasting of 7 July 1998, BS, 18 July 1998.

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