[FI] New Acts on Radio and Television Come into Force

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On 1 January 1999 three new Acts replacing the Radio Equipment Act of 1927 and the Cable Transmission Act of 1987 came into force. The Acts also implement the Television without Frontiers Directive. The Act on Television and Radio Operations (Act 744/1998) generally seeks to promote television and radio broadcasting. It states, inter alia, that licences to operate television or radio broadcasting over the air shall be declared open for application and are to be granted - for a maximum period of ten years - by the government. The government will issue a plan on the use of frequencies. When granting licences, the licensing authority needs to take into consideration freedom of expression, diversity of programming, and the needs of special groups of the public. The government will determine which major (sports) events must be transmitted free of charge. The Act also contains provisions on advertising, teleshopping, sponsorship and the protection of minors. The Telecommunications Administration Centre is to supervise compliance with the Act, except as regards the ethical aspects of advertising and teleshopping, and the protection of minors; these are supervised by the Consumer Ombudsman. Operating licence fees replace the public service fees which national commercial broadcasters were previously required to pay.

The Act on the State Television and Radio Fund (Act 745/1998) is intended to organise the funding of the Finnish Broadcasting Company Ltd (YLE, a public broadcasting company whose purpose is to serve all citizens on a non-commercial basis) and the management of the State Television and Radio Fund. YLE does not need an operating licence since its operations are founded on the Act on the Finnish Broadcasting Company Ltd.

Act 746/1998 on the Amendment of the Act on the Finnish Broadcasting Company Ltd includes the provision that YLE may not produce sponsored programming.

Laki televisio- ja radiotoiminnasta 744/1998

Act 744/1998 on Television and Radio Operations 09/10/1998;

Laki valtion televisio- ja radiorahastosta 745/1998.

Act 745/1998 on the State Television and Radio Fund 09/10/1998.

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Laki Yleisradio Oy:stä annetun lain muutamisesta 746/1998.

Act 746/1998 on the Amendment of the Act on the Finnish Broadcasting Company Ltd 09/10/1998.

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