[CH] New Licences for Private TV Broadcasters

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On 15 March 1999 the Federal Council (Bundesrat) issued new licences for private TV broadcasters in Switzerland.

TV3 is to broadcast a full Swiss programme while the RTL/ProSieben programme window is to show Swiss programmes on two German channels.

TV3 is planning to broadcast a full Swiss programme including news bulletins, talk shows and light entertainment as well as purchased series and films. It sees its role as supplementing the information and entertainment services offered by the Swiss Radio and Television Corporation (Schweizerische Radio- und Fernsehgesellschaft - SRG).

Initially, the station is planning to broadcast between 4 p.m. and midnight; in the longer term it hopes to become a 24-hour service. It is expected to broadcast via satellite and, in the initial stages, will create around 70 jobs. This will be the first time a major Swiss publishing company has been heavily involved in a project to broadcast a full programme.

TA-Media AG and the American/Luxembourg company Scandinavian Broadcasting System SA (SBS) each own 50 % of TV3 AG .

SBS is a Luxembourg-based company which runs TV stations in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium and Hungary. Both shareholders have committed themselves to investing substantial sums in the project. Under the terms of the licence, TV3 is to pay 2 % of its gross income to support the Swiss film industry and devote at least two hours of prime time viewing per day to Swiss productions. The licence expires in mid-2009.

TV3 will go on air in the autumn of 1999.

The programmes to be broadcast on the RTL/ProSieben programme window will be shown simultaneously on both RTL and ProSieben between 6 p.m. and 7.45 p.m. and are expected to include news broadcasts, a magazine programme and a talk show. The service is to be financed mainly by funds already largely being generated by the Swiss advertising market. At least 50 jobs will be created in the initial stages of the project. The licence, which also expires in mid-2009, stipulates that RTL/ProSieben Schweiz will also have to pay 2 % of its gross income to support the Swiss film industry. Broadcasting is scheduled to begin in late

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summer 1999. Shares in the licence holding company are owned by the German TV companies RTL and ProSieben (25 % each), Beat Curti's BC Medien Holding AG and Medien Z Holding AG (12.5 % each). The remaining 25 % of shares is being held in trust by Swiss shareholders and will be placed either on the stock market or privately at some stage in the future.

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