Council of Europe: Switzerland Signs Protocol to Amend the European Convention on Transfrontier Television

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On 23 June 1999 the Swiss government decided to sign the protocol, adopted by the Council of Europe, to amend the European Convention on Transfrontier Television (see IRIS 1998-9:4). At the same time, certain provisions of the Swiss Radio and Television Decree (Radio- und Fernsehverordnung - RTVV) were also brought into line with international law. The new regulations include the right of the general public to free televised access to major sporting and cultural events. In line with EU provisions on the subject, Switzerland will draw up lists of sporting and cultural events of particular social importance (for example, in Switzerland these might include football matches involving the national team, the Cup Final and the federal meeting of Swiss wrestling and alpine games).

Following the decision that the Council of Ministers should sign the amendments, the new provisions came into force with immediate effect on a provisional basis. However, the final decision on the validity of the new provisions must be taken by the Parliament (ratification).

At the same time as signing the amendments to the Convention, the Council of Ministers decided to revise various provisions of the Radio and Television Decree. These amendments concern the abolition of the exploitation chain for films, changes to licensing rights and duties for cable network operators, provisions regarding the licence fee for disabled people, the duty of local authorities to provide the Federal Office for Communications (OFCOM) with free information and the duty of OFCOM to inform the public directly of the decisions that it makes in its supervisory capacity.

Ordonnance sur la radio et la télévision, modification du 23 juin 1999.

Swiss Radio and Television Decree, amendments of 23 June 1999.

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