[GB] Regulator Revokes Licence of Satellite Broadcaster

IRIS 1999-7:1/21

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For the first time, the Independent Television Commission which regulates private broadcasting in the UK, has revoked a broadcaster's licence. The broadcaster involved was Med TV, a satellite television service for a Kurdish audience, broadcasting throughout Europe and based in the UK. The Commission considered that four broadcasts, which had included inflammatory statements encouraging acts of violence in Turkey or elsewhere, were «likely to encourage or incite to crime or lead to disorder» and so would be in breach of UK law as set out in the Broadcasting Acts 1990 and 1996.

In November 1998 the Commission had served a notice on Med TV warning it that the licence would be revoked if over the following six months it failed to comply with the licence conditions and the ITC's programme code after breaches including incitement to violence, lack of impartiality, biased reporting and condoning violent behaviour. A number of further breaches followed. The licence was suspended on 22 March 1999 using powers under section 45A of the Broadcasting Act 1990, which deals specifically with material likely to encourage or incite to crime or lead to disorder (see IRIS 1999-4: 13). A meeting was held on 9 April 1999 to permit Med TV to make representations, as the statute requires. The broadcaster suggested possible remedial measures which would avoid the need for revocation, but the Commission decided that as there had been a failure to implement effectively undertakings given in the past and the breaches had been repeated and serious, action short of revocation would not be adequate.

The revocation came into effect twenty-eight days from the date of the decision of the Commission, 23 April 1999.

ITC News Release 28/99, ITC Revokes Med TV's Licence', 23 April 1999.

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