[BA] Law on Radio-Television of the Republic Srpska Amended

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According to the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA), Bosnia-Herzegovina is composed of two entities: the Federation of BiH (FBiH) and the Republika Srpska (RS). But unlike the FBiH, which consists of 10 cantons, the RS is a highly centralized state. This is reflected on the media sector and in particular the broadcast media.

Since the Government and the National Assembly of the RS did not take any action to ensure compliance of the restructuring of Srpska Radio-Televizija (SRT) with European standards for public service broadcasting, the High Representative issued the Decision on Amending the Law on Radio-Television of Republika Srpska. By this Decision, the Law on Radio-Television of the RS is amended as an interim measure, which shall be replaced by a legislative act from the National Assembly of the RS by 29 February 2000 at the latest. The envisaged legislation must conform to the present Decision, unless the High Representative agrees in advance to amendments or supplements. Furthermore, the Decision of the High Representative does not abrogate the superseding regulatory powers of the Independent Media Commission (IMC) or its successor agency. The important provision of this Decision, although it appears to be of a formal nature, concerns the name given to the former Srpska Radio-Televizija, which is renamed Radio-Televizija Republike Srpske (RT RS). The rewording abrogates the exclusive ethnic prefix, which is in line with the international community's efforts to give both BiH entities a multiethnic character, and their televisions the character of public services. Many articles of the former law are repealed in their entirety, and are replaced, inter alia, by the following: programming should

- fulfill the cultural and linguistic needs of the citizens of the RS;

- contribute to the affirmation of the national values of all the citizens of the RS, to general and health education, the protection of environment, expert improvement and the spread of knowledge in all fields;

- cherish human, moral, aesthetic and artistic values.

In addition, the changes introduced by the Decision envisage the enhanced maintenance and development of the technical basis for broadcasting and transmission system, and to foster the introduction and use of new technologies,

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etc.

It is now expected that future staffing of the RT RS will be balanced in that it will also include employees of non-Serb nationality. For its financing, the RT RS will rely mostly on subscription fees, but also on a government subsidy.

The High Representative's Decision on Amending the Law on Radio-Television of Republika Srpska of 31 August 1999.

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