[LV] Radio and Television Law Amended

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On 11 November 1999 Latvia amended its Radio and Television Law. That Law was originally adopted in 1995 along the lines of the European Convention on Transfrontier Television. Following the amendments to the Convention, the text of the act needed to be amended as well. The change to the Latvian Law was also important in view of the country's intention to enter the European Union and to harmonize its legislation with that of the European Union.

Some new definitions were added such as the definitions of "teleshopping" and "sponsorship" (Article 2). According to the text of the act, "teleshopping" means a broadcast in which a direct offer to supply goods or provide services for payment is expressed, and "sponsorship" means the direct or indirect financing of a programme or a broadcast by a natural or legal person for the purpose of popularizing its name, trademark, type of activities or image.

In addition several restrictions on concentration and monopoly of electronic mass media were added. For example it is now prohibited "to link together in networks regional and/or local electronic mass media except in cases when this has been provided for in the national concept of the development of electronic mass media" (Article 8). The text of the act now also stipulates that a natural person who is the sole founder of a broadcasting entity or whose investment in a broadcasting entity ensures control of it, or the spouse of such a person, may not own more than 25 per cent of the shares in other broadcasting entities.

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