[DE] Protection of Minors on Digital Television

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In mid-April, the Direktorenkonferenz der Landesmedienanstalten (Conference of Regional Media Authority Directors - DLM) adopted a draft set of rules for the protection of minors on private-sector digital television.

The rules make use of the authorisation granted in Article 3.5 of the Rundfunkstaatsvertrag (Agreement between Federal States on Broadcasting - RfStV), amended for the fourth time between 16 July and 31 August 1999, which came into force on 1 April this year (see IRIS 2000-2: 5). Under this provision, it is possible, in certain circumstances, to deviate from the general time restrictions imposed on programmes deemed harmful to minors, provided sufficient methods of encryption and signal blockage are used to protect minors.

According to the rules, which have yet to be approved by the governing bodies of the individual regional media authorities, encryption (Art.3) and access (Art.4) must be provided separately for each individual programme. For example, additional technical precautions must be taken throughout the duration of an individual programme, which must be encoded separately from any general encryption of the channel on which it is shown. The programme can only be accessed by inputting a socalled "youth protection code" either before or during the programme.

Watersheds for films with certain age restrictions are either abolished altogether or brought forward.

There are no time restrictions on programmes harmful to minors if they are only accessible under the conditions mentioned above. These changes do not apply to so-called "listed programmes" which, either fully or to a large extent, reproduce the content of certain works of literature. The rules will enter into force on 1 July 2000.

Satzung zur Gewährleistung des Jugendschutzes in digital verbreiteten Programmen des privaten Fernsehens, Entwurfsfassung der DLM vom 18. April 2000.

http://www.alm.de/aktuelles/presse/jusatz.doc

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Rules on the protection of minors on private-sector digital television channels, draft version prepared by the DLM, 18 April 2000.

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