[NL] Dutch Government Publishes Policy Paper on Cable

IRIS 2000-5:1/14

Nico van Eijk
Institute for Information Law (IViR), University of Amsterdam

The Dutch government has published the long-awaited policy paper on the regulation of cable television networks. According to the paper, several problems exist relating to matters such as access to the networks by program service providers and concerning the composition of the so-called "basic package" (15 television and 25 radio programs that an operator has to carry on his network on the advice of a program committee composed of local representative organizations).

The existing regulatory framework will be adapted in order to further clarify the existing dispute resolution procedure in case of an access conflict between a service provider and the cable operator. The grounds for intervention by the Onafhankelijke Post - en Telecommunicatie Autoriteit (the Dutch Telecommunications Authority - OPTA) are going to be set out in the Telecommunications Act. Also, the government will propose a separation of accounts between the broadcasting and other activities of the operators. Furthermore, creating more independence from the operators will strengthen the position of the program committees. One of the ways to do this might be the introduction of government financing for these committees.

The government is still of the opinion that it is not necessary to take specific regulatory measurements to allow third parties to use the Internet capabilities of cable television networks. However, the Nederlandse Mededingingsautoriteit (the Dutch Competition Authority - NMa) will be asked to closely monitor the development in the market of broadband Internet access.

Parliament will now be in a position to discuss the document and to propose additional changes to the regulation of the cable television networks.

Kabel en consument: Marktwerking en digitalisering, Den Haag, 2000.

http://www.minocw.nl/cultuur/kabelnotitie/kabel2.htm

Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, policy paper on the regulation of cable television networks. the Hague, 2000.

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