[FR] Events of Major Importance in France

IRIS 2001-3:1/14

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Adopted specifically in order to transpose the "Television without Frontiers" Directive into French law, the Act of 1 August 2000 (see IRIS 2000-8: 7) introduces an Article 20-2 into the Audio-visual Communication Act of 30 September 1986, which provides that: "Events of major importance may not be broadcast exclusively in such a way that deprives a significant proportion of the public of the possibility of following the events in a live or recorded broadcast on a freely accessible television service.

The list of events of major importance is to be fixed by decree of the Conseil d'État. The decree shall determine the conditions for applying this article.

Television services may not exercise those exclusive rights acquired since 23 August 1997 in such a way as to deprive a significant proportion of the public of another Member State of the European Community or of a State that is party to the agreement on the European Economic Area of the possibility of following those events declared to be of major importance by that State on a freely accessible television service.

The Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel shall ensure that television services comply with the provisions of this Article."

However, the decree mentioned in paragraph 2, intended to fix the exact list of such events, has not yet been adopted. To date, only the encrypted channel CANAL+ has undertaken, since signing its new convention on 29 May, to refrain from "reserving for itself the exclusivity of broadcasting:

a) the following events:

- Winter Olympic Games,

- Summer Olympic Games,

- Cycling: the Tour de France;

b) matches of:

- the football World Cup,

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- the European football championship,

- the Six Nations rugby tournament in which a French team is playing c) the final match in the Coupe de France football series" (Article 31 of the CANAL+ agreement of 29 May 2000; see IRIS 2000-6: 8).

The list seems to constitute a basic minimum, and will probably be taken up in the regulations for implementing Article 20-2 of the 1986 Act; these should be adopted in the coming months.

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