[AT] Government Adopts New Draft Broadcasting Laws

IRIS 2001-4:1/5

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On 13 March 2001, the Council of Ministers adopted drafts for two new broadcasting laws: an amendment to the Rundfunkgesetz (Broadcasting Act), which forms the legal basis of the ORF (Austrian public service broadcasting corporation), and a new Privatfernsehgesetz (Commercial Television Act).

Under the draft amendment to the Rundfunkgesetz, the ORF is to be converted into a public law foundation. The purpose of the foundation will be to provide public-service broadcasting. It will not be (privately) owned, but will serve the general public. The draft also obliges the ORF to provide technical infrastructure and to forge ahead with digitalisation. The Director General will have authority to issue directives. He can be elected by a simple majority but can only be removed from office by a two-thirds majority. The amendment is expected to enter into force by summer 2001 and the ORF should become a public law foundation by 31 December 2002.

The draft Privatfernsehgesetz contains guidelines for the licensing of (national or regional/local) analog and national digital terrestrial television broadcasters. It also makes provision for the creation of a working group of interested parties, to be called Digitale Plattform Austria (Digital Platform Austria). The group will aim, under the overall charge of the Bundeskanzleramt (Federal Chancellery), to draw up a digitalisation plan in partnership with the regulatory authority, KommAustria, and the relevant companies and institutions.

ORF draft amendment 2001

Privatfernsehgesetz 2001 / Punktation

http://www.bka.gv.at/medien/punktuationprivattv.pdf

Draft Draft Commercial Television Act 2001

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