[BG] Stricter Measures against Pirating

IRIS 1995-7:1/7

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On 19 May, the National Assembly of Bulgaria passed an amendment to the Criminal Code, providing for stricter measures against the pirating of copyright works. The whole of Section VII of Chapter III of the relevant part of the Code (previously headed "Plagiarism") is now headed "Indictable offences against intellectual property". Under the new Article 172a, anyone who for commercial purposes copies, disseminates, uses technical means to reproduce or in any way exploits works of science, literature or art without first obtaining the rightsholder's permission, as required by law, faces imprisonment for up to three years and a fine of up to 200,000 leva (approx. £2,400). Paragraph 2 of the article introduces the same penalties for anyone who for commercial purposes records, copies, transmits or employs technical or other means to exploit sound recordings, videos, broadcasts and computer software and programmes without first securing the rightsholder's permission. In particularly serious cases, prison sentences ranging from one to five years or fines of up to 500,000 leva (approx. £4,900) can be imposed.

The pirated items are subject to confiscation by the state, insofar as they belong to the offender. The authorities hope that the new regulations will curb the present massive copying and illegal dissemination of copyright works, audio and video cassettes, computer software and games, etc.

Act amending and supplementing the Criminal Code of 1968 passed on 19 May 1995, Official Gazette of the Republic of Bulgaria (Darzawen westnik) No. 50 of 1 June 1995.

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