[HR] New Law on Radiotelevision

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On 8 February 2001 the Croatian Parliament passed the new Zakon o Hrvatskoj radiotelevizji (Law on Croatian Radiotelevision - HRT) and is about to significantly change the TV landscape in Croatia from 2002 onwards. The new Law states that the public broadcaster HRT shall privatise its third network within one year, while its section Odasilja´ci i veze (Transmitters and Links) will become a separate state owned public company by 1 January 2002. The Law also plans a further division of HRT in Hrvatska televizija (Croatian Television) and Hrvatski radio (Croatian Radio) by 1 July 2002. HRT will also change its legal format from a "public company" (a legal form similar to shareholder companies) to a "public institution", which will be 100% state owned and under the supervision of Croatian Parliament. The HRT will be supervised and managed by the following bodies: Vije´ce HRT-a (HRT Council), Upravno vije´ce HRT-a (HRT Board of Management) and Ravnatelj HRT-a (Director of the HRT).

The HRT Council will represent and protect the interests of the television and radio public regarding the production and supervision of programming. It will consist of 25 members appointed by various public institutions (Universities, Croatian Academy of Science and Arts, Unions etc). The President of Croatia, the Prime Minister and the President of Croatian Parliament will appoint 3 out of the 25 members of the Council. Neither members of parliament nor other state officials are allowed to be members of HRT Council or of the Board of Management. The HRT Council will have the right to make recommendations to the HRT Board of Management regarding the appointment and the dismissal of the Director of HRT, and will appoint or dismiss the editors-in-chief of Croatian Radio and of Croatian Television with the prior consent of HRT Board of Management.

The business affairs of HRT shall be undertaken by the Board of Management, which shall have 7 members appointed by the Zastupnicki dom (The House of Representatives) of the Croatian Parliament. One member must be chosen from among HRT employees and the remaining 6 members from among economic, financial and legal experts, cultural workers and media experts. The Board of Management appoints the Director of HRT as well as the Assistant Directors upon the Director's proposal. At least once a year the HRT Council and the Board of Management will have to submit a report on their work to the House of Representatives of the Croatian Parliament.

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The Director of the HRT represents the HRT and is responsible for the lawfulness and success of the HRT's work. He will be appointed for a term of four years and may be relieved of his duties before the end of that period only if he fails to carry out his obligations.

The majority of the television programming has to be of domestic and European production, without neglecting Croatian programs. At least 10% of the total television programs broadcast except news bulletins, sporting events, game shows and commercials, shall be commissioned by the HRT from independent production companies. The duration of advertising messages in every HRT program must not exceed 9 minutes per hour of the program while teleshopping is not allowed. Two or more advertising messages (advertising block) may be broadcast only between separate programs. The news, religious, children programs, programs lasting less than 30 minutes and feature films cannot be interrupted by advertising messages. The HRT shall not broadcast advertising messages on behalf of political parties, religious communities and trade unions. The prohibition on the broadcast of advertising by political parties shall not apply during electoral campaigns.

Owners of radio and TV receivers in the territory of the Republic of Croatia shall be obliged to pay a fee to finance the HRT. The amount of the fee shall be 1.5% of the average monthly net income of employees in the Republic of Croatia, based on statistical data for the previous year.

Zakon o Hrvatskoj Radioteleviziji, Narodne novine br. 17/2001 02.03.2001

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