[NL] Dutch Council of Ministers Accepts Procedure for DVB-T Licensing

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The Dutch kabinet (Council of Ministers) has agreed with the proposal of the Minister of State for Education, Culture and Science, Rick van der Ploeg, to grant licences for Digital Video Broadcasting-Terrestrial (DVB-T). One licence - covering four of the five multiplexes to be awarded by the Government - will be granted to a commercial operator on the basis of a "beauty contest". The other licence, that covers one multiplex, will go to the public broadcasters. At least 80% of the capacity will be allocated for broadcasting traditional television programmes. The remaining capacity may be used for data services and other broadcasting services. The Council of Ministers intends to award the licences soon after the end of the summer. The first digital broadcasts are expected to start six months later. The licences will be granted for a period of fifteen years, in order to give the licensee a reasonable period to recover the high costs involved.

The Council of Ministers expects that digital terrestrial television prove a viable alternative to cable television because of the combination of public and commercial television and additional new digital services. The frequencies for commercial use are meant to be used for programme offers that would compete with cable programme offers. The Council of Ministers chose the allocation procedure of a "beauty contest" to allow for the overseeing of whether the licensee actively pursues the desired competition between the infrastructures. The policy plan will be discussed in the Dutch Parliament on 27 June.

"Kabinet stemt in met procedure voor vergunning van digitale ethertelevisie", 1 June 2001

Press Release of the Council of Ministers of 1 June 2001

Policy of the Council of Ministers on the Distribution of Frequencies for Digital Terrestrial Television, Kamerstukken II 2000-2001, 24 095, nr. 70

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