[NL] Dutch Media Authority Bans Broadcaster from Exploitation of Internet Site

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On 19 June 2001, the Commissariaat voor de Media (the Dutch Media Authority) announced its decision to ban the regional public broadcasting station L1 from the further exploitation of its commercial Internet site, www.L1boulevard.nl.

The site is a virtual shopping mall, where regional companies can place their latest offers and consumers may search for desired products and services. It is a cooperative venture with the Belgian regional broadcaster TV Limburg, which has an almost identical site and a link to its Dutch counterpart. According to the Dutch Media Authority, this kind of commercial exploitation contradicts the important principle that a public broadcaster should be non-commercial. Participation in the commercial Internet site is in conflict with Article 57a1(b) of the Dutch Media Act, 1987, which states that any sideline activity should be "connected with or support" the broadcaster's task of providing the public with high quality, non-commercial programmes. L1's participation in this site was deemed not to be such an activity.

Reacting to the decision, the broadcaster expressed its surprise at the ban, contending that www.L1boulevard.nl is not L1's main site and that there would be several other portals (currently under construction) in the near future.

"Toetsing betrokkenheid Stichting Omroep Limburg bij internetsite www.L1boulevard.nl", Commissariaat voor de Media, 19 June 2001

Announcement of the Commissariaat voor de Media of 19 June 2001

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