[DE] Agreement on Multimedia Home Platform Standard

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Public and private broadcasters in Germany have agreed to adopt the Multimedia Home Platform (MHP) standard. This so-called "open" standard should ensure that every form of digitised media service is supported by all broadcasting platforms and terminal equipment. It should therefore be possible to incorporate extra applications such as electronic programme guides (EPG) and conditional access systems (CAS) in the same piece of terminal equipment without having to rely on the proprietary systems of a broadcaster or service provider.

The consensus is being linked to the recent sale of a number of regional cable operators by Deutsche Telekom AG to American investors, some of whom also hold shares in content-providing companies. As part of the general reform of its legal framework for communications, the European Community has already discussed the idea that all service providers in Europe should be forced to use the MHP standard. However, the Commission appeared reluctant to impose such a requirement. A voluntary agreement between broadcasters and equipment manufacturers was thought to be preferable, primarily so that technical progress could be taken into account.

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