[DE] ARD and ZDF Support “Signal Solution” for 2002 World Cup

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In early February 2002, broadcasters ARD and ZDF expressed their joint endorsement of the so-called "signal solution" for the digital satellite transmission of the 2002 football World Cup. ARD and ZDF acquired the rights to broadcast the World Cup in Germany from the Kirch group. However, satellite broadcasts can also be received in other European countries. In its contract with ARD and ZDF, Kirch had insisted that the licensees should only be allowed to broadcast the event digitally via satellite provided they did not breach the exclusive transmission rights of licensees in other countries. There was a disagreement between the German rightsholders and the Spanish licensee Via Digital in relation to the broadcasting of the World Cup draw on 1 December 2001. ARD proposed that the digital transmission should be altered so that programmes could only be received in Germany. World Cup matches would be broadcast via special signals which could not be processed by foreign payTV decoders. Unfortunately, this would mean that German viewers would have to search for a new channel on their digital receivers. For this reason, ZDF had initially opposed this idea, proposing instead that the World Cup should not be broadcast digitally via satellite at all.

Tests have shown that programmes broadcast using the special signals suggested by ARD cannot be received by viewers in Spain and Poland using the standard pay-TV decoders available in those countries.

The Kirch group has so far rejected this plan, preferring encryption of the signals transmitted digitally via satellite.

The Kirch group and Via Digital are still arguing over whether their contract authorises German broadcasting of the World Cup using analogue satellite signals. Analogue broadcasting has always involved discrepancies between the territory covered by a licence and that in which signals can actually be received - a problem which has so far been tolerated.

Erklärung des Vorsitzenden der Direktorenkonferenz der Landesmedienanstalten Dr. Norbert Schneider zu den Folgen der Verschlüsselung über Satellit vom 19. April 2001

http://www.alm.de/aktuelles/presse/p190401.htm

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Statement by Dr. Norbert Schneider, Chairman of the Conference of Land Media Authority Directors on the consequences of satellite encryption of 19 April 2001

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