

[SE] Advertising Breaks Allowed

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Ever since Sweden first allowed television advertising in 1991, the rule has been that advertisements must be placed between programmes. The purpose of designing the legislation in this manner was to protect the audience from excessive interruptions of programmes. However, broadcasters soon found a way around this by broadcasting mini-programmes, thus creating artificial intermissions. Television advertisements could then legally be placed in the intermissions. As a consequence, the "breaks" in the original programme became longer and, most likely, more irritating to the viewers. The fact that Swedish legislation was stricter in this respect than that of most European countries also put Swedish broadcasters at a disadvantage compared to many of their competitors based elsewhere.

The Radio and Television Act has now been amended, expanding from 1 April 2002 the possibility of interrupting programmes for advertising; bringing Swedish legislation closer to the "Television without Frontiers" Directive. The wording of the relevant provisions closely follows that of the Directive. The mini-programme loophole can still be exploited, but the broadcasters' incentive to use it has been greatly reduced.

In two respects, the Swedish legislation is still stricter than the Directive. Advertising targeting children and advertising in children's programmes are still banned and the amount of advertising allowed remains lower, at 10 % and 8-10 minutes per hour.

Lag (2002:116) om ändring i radio- och TV-lagen (1996:844)

http://www.grn.se/verksamheten/rattskallor_content_radiotvlagen.asp

Act nr. 2002:116 amending the Radio and Television Act nr. 1996:844

