[CH] Largest Swiss Cable Operator Granted Digital TV Licence

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Cablecom GmbH has been given the green light to proceed with its plans for digital television in Switzerland. The Bundesrat (Council of Ministers) has granted Switzerland's largest cable operator a national TV licence for the provision of pay-TV. Cablecom plans to set up an encrypted digital TV service known as Cablecom Digital Cinema, which will be offered to cable customers for an additional payment. A key feature of the package is a so-called Near-Video-onDemand service, whereby feature films in particular are broadcast simultaneously on several different channels. Since the start times are staggered, customers can tune in to the service whenever is convenient for them. The service is provided on a pay-per-view basis, ie customers pay for what they actually watch.

However, in order to guarantee diversity in the cable networks, the Government has laid down various conditions in Cablecom's licence and has also demanded that it promote Swiss films. In the licence, the Bundesrat has also taken account of the fact that Switzerland's largest network operator (with a 50% market share) will now also become a content-provider. In order to ensure a certain level of diversity in television, Cablecom may, for example, use no more than 10% of its network capacity for its own programmes. A series of provisions relating to the set-top box should ensure that market conditions are fair for other providers.

Pressemitteilung des Bundesrats vom 26. Juni 2002

http://www.admin.ch/cp/d/3d197f61_1@fwsrvg.bfi.admin.ch.html

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