[HR] HRTL Wins the Bid for the Third National TV Concession

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The HRTL company, consisting of the German RTL company and Croatia's Agrokor, Podravka, Atlantic Group, HVB/Splitska Bank, and Pinta TV3, has been given a 10-year concession for nation-wide television broadcasting in Croatia.

HRTL was selected from among seven candidates by the Croatian Radio and Television Council, which chose HRTL's bid at a session on 16 September 2003. The selected concession-holder won five out of nine votes from the Council in the second round, when it competed with TV Moslavina, which mustered two votes. Another two votes were blank. HRTL beat, among others, the Rovita company, whose backer was Rupert Murdoch, one of the biggest media magnates in Britain, and Fina-Mur company, backed by Scandinavian SBS. The annual fee for the concession for Croatian Television's third channel will be HRK 300,000, plus HRK 100,000 for the use of the frequency (total EUR 50,000). HRTL announced that it plans to start broadcasting an "entertaining and pleasant programme" in six months' time, with plenty of domestic production. The Head of the OSCE mission to Croatia expressed his satisfaction "with the openness of the selection procedure" and his conviction that this decision "will hopefully contribute to the pluralism of the television market in Croatia". The Council for Radio and Television on 3 June 2003 opened bids submitted through the public tender and organized a public presentation by all bidders with each bidder having 20 minutes for presentation on 12 June 2003. The concession for the third television network currently operated by Croatian public broadcaster Hrvatska radiotelevizija (Croatian Radio-Television - HRT) was assigned according to the provisions of the Chapter XII, Radio and Television of the Law on Telecommunications ("Official Gazette" number 76/99, 128/99, 68/01 and 109/01) on which basis the tender was placed, although the new Law on Electronic Media has entered into force on 7 August 2003 and is being applied as of 1 September 2003 (see article infra).

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