[LV] Introduction of Digital TV in Latvia

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During summer 2003, some important developments took place that might delay the introduction of digital television in Latvia.

Latvia began to plan the introduction of digital TV as early as the year 2000. At that time Radio and Television Centre of Latvia sold 23% of the shares of Latvia Mobile Telephone to its daughter company Digital Radio and Television Centre of Latvia (DRTCL) to secure the financial means necessary for the introduction of digital TV. The DRTCL was established with the aim of implementing a digital television broadcasting network in Latvia and, by the end of 2006, to provide digital TV programme coverage in 97% of the territory of the Republic of Latvia. In 2001 a digital broadcasting network was developed. In May 2002 DRTCL began test broadcasting of digital television. At the end of 2002 it signed EUR a 150 million contract with Kempmayer Media Ltd. (based in the UK) envisaging that the company could freely choose the suppliers and sub-contractors in the process of introducing digital TV. The financing, which should secure this agreement, should come from the shares of Latvia Mobile Telephone. On 19 August 2003, the Chairman of the Board of the DRTCL handed in his resignation. On 26 August the Minister of Transport and Communications announced that the agreement mentioned above would be disadvantageous to Latvia. Therefore, on 29 August, the DRTCL filed a claim against Kempmayer Media Ltd. at the Arbitration Court of International Trade Chamber with the demand to suspend the agreement signed between the parties on 14 November 2002. The court decision is still pending as is the introduction of digital TV in Latvia.

Satiksmes ministrs saņēmis juristu atzinumu par DLRTC līgumu

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