[GB] System for Regulating Broadcast Advertising Content Changed

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In October 2003, the Office of Communications (OFCOM) initiated a consultation regarding "contracting out its broadcast advertising regulatory functions to a self-regulator in a co-regulatory partnership..."

The proposal was that a new body under the "banner" of the existing Advertising Standards Authority be established to draw up, review and enforce an advertising content code for broadcast television and radio. The code-setting body would be the Broadcasting Committee of Advertising Practice and the enforcement body would be the Advertising Standards Authority (Broadcasting). OFCOM would retain "back stop powers over the new system and would monitor its effectiveness".

Around 78 responses to the consultation were received.

On 17 May, OFCOM published its decision, which establishes the basis for a new system for regulating broadcast advertising content. It will be launched in November 2004 but only after Parliament has given its approval under the Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994.

Under the general responsibility of the existing Advertising Standards Authority, several new agencies will be set up:

- the Advertising Standards Authority (Broadcast) (ASA(B)) to deal with complaints;

- the Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice (BCAP)

to deal with the codes; also within BCAP, the Advertising Advisory Committee (AAC) to offer BCAP "independent advice on advertising policy and code-setting issues". The AAC is to have an independent Chairman and "expert and lay citizen-consumer representatives";

- the Broadcast Advertising Standards Board of Finance (BASBOF) to deal with the funding for the new system.

OFCOM will have powers to "insist on changes being made to the broadcast advertising Codes" and also have a "right of veto on any proposed changes."

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Advertising Association's special web-site for information on the new co-regulatory system

http://www.adconsult.info/

Ofcom's consultation document, October 2003

http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/past/reg_broad_ad/broadcast_advertising/

Ofcom's decision paper, "The Future Regulation of Broadcast Advertising", 17 May 2004

http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations/past/reg_broad_ad/future_reg_broad/

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