[DE] Government Bill Amending

IRIS 2004-9:1/15

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On 9 July 2004, the Landtag (regional parliament) of North Rhine-Westphalia held a hearing on a Bill tabled by the Landesregierung (regional government) amending the Gesetz für den Westdeutschen Rundfunk (West German Broadcasting Act). The participants included representatives of regional broadcasting authorities, regulatory bodies, cable and satellite associations and academics.

Based on the complaints management system used by the British public broadcaster BBC, the Bill proposes the creation of an independent programming and complaints body, which would decide on viewers' complaints in agreement with the director general. WDR has rejected the idea of creating such a body as unnecessary and too cost-intensive.

As far as WDR's online services are concerned, the Bill follows the corresponding provisions of the 7. Rundfunkänderungs-Staatsvertrags (7th Inter-State Broadcasting Agreement). These state that media services with programme-related content may be offered. Advertising and sponsorship in relation to online services are expressly prohibited.

Another aspect of the Bill which follows the BBC's example is the procedure for the definition by WDR of its own remit. Here again it transposes a provision of the 7. Rundfunkänderungs-Staatsvertrag, which requires the regional broadcasting bodies that make up the ARD, as well as ZDF and Deutschlandradio, to define their own remit. According to the Bill, they should particularly include: details of programming structure; principles for the guarantee of journalistic and qualitative standards; general provisions on the quality and quantity of channels and programmes; information on the proposed emphases of the various channels; conceptual details of programme development and the strengthening of regional services; strategies to improve viewer relations and participation. In addition, the director general of each broadcaster should send to the Rundfunkrat (Broadcasting Council) an annual report on its fulfilment of this remit and, every two years, an implementation report.

Regierungsentwurf zum WDR-Gesetz

http://www.landtag.nrw.de/WWW/Webmaster/GB_I/I.4/Dokumentenarchiv/dokument.php?quelle=alle&action=anzeigen&wm=1&Id=MMD13/5395

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Government Bill on the WDR Act

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