[CZ] Electronic Communications Act Approved

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On 22 February 2005 the Parliament of the Czech Republic approved the new Electronic Communications Act. According to the principal policy documents of the European Union, the new law should enhance business in the sector. It should provide a set of rules which will play a major role in determining the economy of the whole country in a time of turbulent changes in market and technological developement.

With this Act the content and specific processes for the implementation of the e-Europe 2002 Action Plan now apply in the Czech Republic.

The new regulation will bring changes particularly in regard to the further simplification of the entry into the market through the introduction of the general authorization and cancellation of licences. Individual authorizations will remain valid - in compliance with EC regulation - only in the field of the use of frequencies and telephone numbers. Another important innovation will be the implementation of periodical analyses of relevant markets, allowing the introduction of flexible and transparent regulatory measures for the electronic communications market. The new law will bring a number of other regulations, mainly in the field of universal services, rights and duties of corporate bodies or price regulations. The Act will increase the impact on the fields that have so far not been covered by the Act on Telecommunications. Certain powers of the independent regulatory body for telecommunications, the Czech Telecommunications Office(ČTÚ), that apart from the regulatory functions also exercises the routine administrative activity relating mainly to the application of the Act on Telecommunications, will be strengthened. This is carried out namely with regard to the situation in the market for electronic communications in the Czech Republic and the implementation of EC Directives.The Czech Telecommunications Office will be the independent national regulatory authority having the competencies for electronic communications and will also be competent in infrastructure-related aspects of electronic communications networks and services. Another important competence assigned to the regulatory authority is the arbitration of interconnection disputes. According to the new law, ČTÚ will have flexible competencies in imposing specific obligations on providers with significant market power. The new Act enters into force on 1 May 2005.

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