

[TR] Recent Changes in Audio-Visual Media Ownership

IRIS 2006-2:1/33

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The biggest Turkish media-group Dogan purchased by auction the commercial broadcaster Star TV in September 2005. The transfer from the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund TMSF which directed Star TV for 21 months was realised in November 2005. Dogan paid USD 306.5 million to become owner of the channel. The former owner of Star TV was businessman Cem Uzan. Star TV had been transferred to the public authority TMSF.

There are some concerns regarding this purchase since the Dogan group owns almost half of the Turkish media industry comprising newspapers, magazines, book publishing, distribution, bookstores, news agencies, television, radio, internet portals etc. Critics say that media pluralism will decrease and media concentration increase due to this transaction.

Other changes in media ownership again occurred in September 2005 in the series of auctions begun by the TMSF: Uzans' music video channel Kral TV was sold to the Çukurova group for USD 45.100,000.

Commercial channels in Turkey began broadcasting in 1990. The legal regulation was enacted in 1994, after the Parliament had amended the Constitution in 1993 and lifted the state monopoly on radio and television broadcasting. Also, provisions on media ownership were drawn up. The latest amendments in 2002 did not take into account the ownership structure anymore. Instead it had to consider the annual average audience with a threshold of 20% to judge if a merger had to be allowed. However, these provisions were annulled by the Constitutional Court following the President's veto. Thus, the situation on how to judge on media ownership issues remains unclear.

Currently three media groups dominate about 3/4 of the market. Dogan, Merkez and Çukurova are the main three stakeholders. However, especially after purchasing Star TV, the Dogan group increased its power and share: Now, Dogan group's TV channel has an audience share of approximately 25 %. The group's total share in the advertising market is almost 45 %.

