[MK] Broadcasting Act Enters into Force

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A new Law on Broadcasting Activity entered into force in the Republic of Macedonia on 29 November 2005. One of its purposes is to bring domestic law into line with the EU Television Without Frontiers Directive.

The Law is divided into 17 chapters and comprehensively regulates many different aspects of broadcasting. It begins by defining certain terms and dividing broadcasters into public, commercial and non-profit broadcasting companies. The highly detailed Chapter III is devoted to the protection of pluralism, diversity and transparency of the work of broadcasters. In order to control illegal media concentration, it requires broadcasters, for example, to inform the Broadcasting Council about any change to their ownership structure. The Law explains in detail the kinds of shareholdings that broadcasters may not own in other media companies (daily newspapers, other television broadcasters, as well as news agencies and advertising agencies).

Following provisions on the Broadcasting Council (Chapter IV), Chapter V describes the licensing procedure, licence fees and the possible revocation of licences. Chapter VI of the Law deals with programme standards in the broadest sense. Programmes must take into account factors such as freedom from discrimination, copyright and the protection of minors. Quotas for Macedonian programmes are laid down, as well as a list of major events which must be freely accessible to all.

The content, insertion and duration of advertising are regulated in detail in Chapter VII on advertising, teleshopping and sponsorship. Different regulations apply for public and commercial broadcasters.

The technical aspects of broadcasting are regulated in the chapter on the transmission of programmes via public communication networks (Chapter VIII) and the chapter on the public operator for transmission of radio and television signals (X). Chapter XIII covers access to information and makes provision for the right to short reporting. Other chapters contain provisions on public broadcasting (IX), the financing of broadcasting (XI), the right to reply (XII) and the protection of sources of information (XIV). The final chapters deal with supervision of the enforcement of the law (XV), penalty provisions (XVI) and transitional provisions (XVII).

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Law on Broadcasting Activity

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