[FR] CSA Recommendation on the “Aerial Service” to Be Offered by Digital Cable Networks

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Following the breakdown of negotiations between the *Conseil Supérieur de l’Audiovisuel* (French audiovisual regulatory authority - CSA) and cable operators offering digital transmission on the reasonably-priced delivery of free terrestrially broadcast digital television channels (the “aerial service”) in buildings with cable, the CSA has now issued a recommendation on the subject. The purpose of Article 34-1 of the Act of 30 September 1986 (as amended) is to ensure that homes in blocks of flats that are no longer connected to an aerial but to a cable distribution network are able to receive the terrestrially broadcast television channels for which no payment is charged that are normally received in the area, without being obliged to subscribe to a package of pay channels. The CSA’s attention had been drawn to the conditions and time taken for implementing this “extended aerial service” and to the rates being charged by certain cable operators for renting an adaptor. Article 34-1 in fact states that the amount charged must cover only “the cost of installation, maintenance, and replacement of the network”. This means that if the rate being charged for the aerial service plus the unencrypted terrestrially broadcast digital television channels is more than was being charged previously for the aerial service without these channels, the cable operators will have to provide the CSA with justification for the increase. On the matter of the adaptor, the CSA proposes three options:

- mere re-transmission of the terrestrially broadcast signals of free digital television channels;

- distribution of the free channels using the unencrypted DVB-C standard, which would involve marketing bi-standard adaptors at the same price as an adaptor for terrestrially broadcast digital television;

- making an adaptor available against a deposit or at a purchase price corresponding to the mere cost of purchasing and set-up.

The cable operators have three months from the date of publication of the Recommendation to comply with the CSA’s requirements.

Recommandation du CSA relative au service antenne sur les réseaux câblés numériques, Journal officiel du 31 mars 2006

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http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/WAspad/UnTexteDeJorf?numjo=CSAX0604002X

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