[DE] Broadcasting Fee for Internet PCs

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In the continuing debate over the level of the broadcasting fee to be introduced for Internet PCs on 1 January 2007, the ARD directors decided at their general meeting in Schwerin to propose that owners of an Internet PC or a UMTS mobile telephone be charged a monthly fee of EUR 5.52 from 1 January 2007. Private households which already pay a TV or radio licence fee are exempt from the new regulation. The amount to be charged is based on the sum paid by owners of devices capable of receiving radio transmissions, known as the " *Grundgebühr* ". The *ARD* directors wish to take account of the fact that the Internet does not yet provide a comprehensive television service, but is used extensively for radio and podcasts. In the *8. Rundfunkänderungsstaatsvertrag* (8th amendment to the Inter-State Broadcasting Agreement) adopted in autumn 2004, it was originally laid down that the television licence fee of EUR 17.03 per month should apply to Internet-enabled PCs.

The *Bundesländer* , who will now make the final decision, have responded positively to the *ARD* directors' decision, despite some fierce resistance from politicians and businesses to the idea of a broadcasting fee for PCs. Associations representing businesses and industry have criticised the decision to apply the fee to devices that are not primarily used to receive broadcasting services, and see no sense in charging a fee for services that are not used. They do not think that the compromise proposal resolves the fundamental problem of device-related fees. The industry and some politicians are therefore calling for the broadcasting fee to be replaced by a media tax levied on each household or individual.

The reduced basic charge will apply just once to any company premises, no matter how many PCs there are. Under the proposal, there will be no additional fee for a PC if a payment is already made for a company car radio. At present, 90% of broadcasting fee revenue comes from private households. So far, the European Commission has not taken part in the current discussions about the future financing of public service broadcasting.

Pressemitteilung der ARD

http://www.presseportal.de/story.htx?nr=872792&firmaid=29876

ARD press release

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