[LV] EU Twinning Project Successfully Concluded

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At the end of a six-month EU twinning project, funded to the tune of EUR 90,000 by the European Commission with the purpose of improving the supervision of broadcasting in Latvia, representatives of the *Nacionālā Radio un Televīzijas Padome* (National Broadcasting Council - NRTP) and its German partner, the *Landesanstalt für Kommunikation Baden-Württemberg* (Baden-Württemberg Communications Authority - LFK), discussed their interpretation of the legal framework with representatives of Latvian broadcasting in Riga on 22 August 2006.

The interpretation guidelines concern the protection of minors, general programming rules and human dignity, journalistic and ethical principles, European audiovisual works, advertising, teleshopping and sponsorship. The numerous broadcasting representatives present were given until 5 September 2006 to submit in writing their opinions on the draft guidelines.

The hearing was held in order to promote transparency and open exchange between regulators and broadcasters as part of a modern, co-operative administrative structure, so that future infringements may be prevented.

The interpretation guidelines are the centrepiece of the EU project, in which the NRTP and the LFK , as well as basic principles of broadcasting law, also developed concepts for programme evaluation and for the technical infrastructure required in order to implement legal provisions governing the supervision of broadcasting.

The NRTP monitors the programmes of two public service and 25 private TV channels, five public service and 30 private radio stations, as well as cable television and radio channels and one satellite radio station.

The legal framework is laid down in the Radio and Television Act of 8 September 1995, most recently amended on 16 December 2004 (see IRIS 2005-1: Extra), which transposes the provisions of the EC Television Without Frontiers Directive. In this respect, the project partners were able to refer to the extensive and detailed guidelines and comments on German broadcasting law. The criteria for interpreting the rules on fulfilling European quotas were of particular interest.

A round-table discussion provided a significant forum for the consideration of problematic Internet content and the need and potential for regulations extending beyond traditional broadcasting.

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