# [BG] New Stage in the Licensing of Radio and Television Broadcasting

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At the beginning of 2007 new tenders for regional analogue terrestrial television broadcasting are to be opened - two in the city of Plovdiv (January 2007), three in the city of Varna (January 2007) and three in the city of Sofia (February 2007) - following procedures already opened on 11 May 2006 by the Council for Electronic Media for 22 regional radio stations which should be completed by the end of December 2006.

The procedures are a consequence of a new strategy for the development of radio and television activity through terrestrial broadcasting which entered into force at the beginning of 2006. The amendment of the *Zakon za Radioto i Televizata* (Bulgarian Radio and Television Act) in 2002 (see IRIS 2002-2: 3) empowered the Council for Electronic Media (CEM) to grant licences after the adoption of a strategy by the Parliament. The CEM and the Communications Regulation Commission had already prepared a draft just three months after the introduction of the amendments to the Radio and Television Act, but adoption by the Parliament was effected only in September 2005 after the recommendations of the European Commission given by their representatives at a meeting with members of the Bulgarian Parliament in September 2005.

Now, due to the new strategy many television and also radio broadcasters submitted their applications for new licences. Based on these applications the Communications Regulation Commission presented information to the CEM on the available frequencies whereupon the CEM adopted a special regulation for organising the licensing tender procedures. These regulations are based on the following principles:

1. all radio and television broadcasters are allowed to take part in the tenders with the exception of Bulgarian National Television and Bulgarian National Radio;

2. the principles of publicity, transparency and independence should be observed;

3. all bidders should have equal rights and no privileges for particular bidders are allowed;

4. the tender documentation is treated as confidential;

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5. no conflicts of interest;

6. the tender procedures should be performed within a strict timeframe.

Further, the CEM adopted criteria for awarding the licences - such as organisational structure, experience, financial and technical plans - which are appraised and weighted on a scale of 100 points.

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