[BA] Amendments to the Advertising and Sponsorship Code for Radio and Television

IRIS 2007-2:1/11

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The Communications Regulatory Agency (RAK) of Bosnia and Herzegovina, responsible for the broadcasting and telecommunications sector, has adopted changes and amendments to the Advertising and Sponsorship Code for Radio and Television, in accordance with Article 39, Section 1, of the BiH Law on Communications (BiH Official Gazette, No. 31/03).

Compared with the previous one the new Code includes some significant changes related to the advertising of certain products and services, as well as to the protection of minors.

The Code strictly forbids advertising and tele-shopping featuring tobacco products, and featuring medication and medical treatments available only on prescription. Furthermore, people who regularly appear in the television programmes are not allowed to participate in advertising and tele-shopping, whether in visual or audio form.

The Code rules restrict advertising of alcoholic beverages, which shall not be specifically aimed at minors, and should not, in particular, promote the image of alcoholic drinks as enhancing health or social strength.

According to the amended Code, the total amount of advertising should not exceed 15 per cent of the daily transmission time, or more than 20 per cent in any given clock hour, which means not more than 12 minutes of commercials per hour. Public broadcasters should not exceed a limit of six minutes per hour of commercial breaks.

The new Code includes a new watershed for advertising and tele-shopping of products and services, which was previously limited to the period between 22:00 and 6:00 hours. Now, it has been moved to the period between 24:00 and 6:00 hours. The reasoning was, in particular, the aim of protection of children. In general, the Code forbids any advertising that endangers the health, mental and moral state or the development of children.

Bosnia and Herzegovina ratified the European Convention on Transfrontier Television (ECTT) on 5 January 2005, which entered into force on 1 May 2005. Therefore, the ECTT is directly applicable as primary legislation in BiH. Although not so far being an EU Member State, but only a potential candidate country, BiH

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also agreed to the need to comply with the EU's Television without Frontiers Directive. The main reason for the amendment of the Code is, therefore, to bring it into harmony with European media standards.The new Advertising and Sponsorship Code for Radio and Television entered into force on 1 January 2007.

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