[DE] Agreement on Merger of Two *Land* Media Authorities Enters into Force

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On 1 March 2007, the joint Media Law Agreement between the *Länder* of Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein (*Medienstaatsvertrag HSH*) entered into force.

The Agreement concerns, in particular, the merger between the *Landesmedienanstalten* (media authorities) of two *Bundesländer* , the *Hamburgische Anstalt für neue Medien* (Hamburg New Media Office - HAM) and Schleswig-Holstein's *Unabhängige Landesanstalt für Rundfunk und neue Medien* (Independent State Broadcasting and New Media Office - ULR) (see IRIS 2006-7: 10 and IRIS 2006-4: 11). The new joint supervisory authority is called the *Medienanstalt Hamburg/Schleswig-Holstein* (Hamburg/Schleswig-Holstein Media Office - MA HSH). The 16 German *Bundesländer* , therefore, now have a total of 14 *Landesmedienanstalten* ; the *Medienanstalt Berlin-Brandenburg* (Berlin-Brandenburg Media Office) is also a joint body for the *Bundesländer* of Berlin und Brandenburg. The Agreement also sets out the details of common media law between the two *Länder* .

The future of the Agreement, which had been signed by the Minister-Presidents in June 2006, had been clouded in uncertainty for a long time after the *Landtag* (state parliament) in Schleswig-Holstein had decided there was no reason to adopt the agreement. However, following several amendments, particularly those concerning the funding of the MA HSH and its responsibilities in terms of media competence and education, which were included in an amendment adopted on 13 February 2007, the necessary consent was secured. This Agreement should enter into force on 1 July 2007; if it is not ratified, it will be abolished completely.

On 1 October 2006, the so-called *Offene Kanal* (Open Channel) in Schleswig-Holstein was removed from the control of the ULR and became an autonomous body under a *Land* law; it is now a legally responsible public law body known as *Offener Kanal Schleswig-Holstein* and supervised by the Director of the MA HSH.

Staatsvertrag über das Medienrecht in Hamburg und Schleswig-Holstein

http://www.ma-hsh.de/

Inter-State Agreement on media law in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein

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Gesetz über den Offenen Kanal Schleswig-Holstein

http://www.ulr.de/ULR_Rechtsgrundlagen/Filebase/okgesetz.pdf

Offener Kanal Schleswig-Holstein Act

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