

[MK] Public Call for Transferring the Concessions into Licences Is Closed

IRIS 2007-5:1/22

*Sašo Bogdanovski
Broadcasting Council of the Republic of Macedonia*

With the Act on Broadcasting Activity, adopted on 9 November 2005 (see IRIS 2006-4: 17), which entered into force on 29 November 2005, the Broadcasting Act of 1997 (amended in 2003) and the Act on Establishing the Public Enterprise Macedonian Radio Television were replaced. The replaced acts had determined a dual system of public and commercial broadcasting, as a primary objective of the legislator. They enabled the continuation of the operation of the public broadcaster, Macedonian Radio and Television, as well as of the existing public local radio stations and introduced the formal establishment of commercial broadcasting companies - the private broadcasting sector - after the tender procedures for granting concessions. With the Act on Broadcasting Activity of 2005, the system of licences was introduced to replace the existing concessions for broadcasting activity. Furthermore, the possibility of the establishment of non-profit broadcasting establishments was introduced.

After the conclusion of the process of public and institutional consultations, as well as the adoption of several necessary bylaws, the Broadcasting Council of the Republic of Macedonia opened a public call with the objective to transfer the concessions already granted for broadcasting activity, into licences. Those eligible for the public call included all radio and television broadcasters who had previously signed concessional contracts with the Macedonian Government, according to the former Broadcasting Law. A second particular condition for the eligibility of broadcasters was their commitment to chapter three "Protection of pluralism and diversity of broadcasting organisations" of the Act on Broadcasting Activity of 2005. The public call was open for 45 days from its public announcement in the Official Gazette. The broadcasters were obligated to submit application forms with the requested documentation regarding general, technical, production, programming and other conditions of their broadcasting activity. The public call was closed on 10 April 2007. The Broadcasting Council will decide on the award of broadcasting licences according to the provisions of the Law on Broadcasting Activity, after the review on the fulfilment of prerequisites and rules for obtaining a licence to perform broadcasting activity. It is expected that transferring the concessions into licences will lead to a rationalisation of the broadcasting landscape in Macedonia, and will provide the necessary stage towards the preparation and adoption of the "Strategy for development of broadcasting activity in the Republic of Macedonia".

Act on Broadcasting Activity, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 100/05

<http://www.srd.org.mk/WBStorage/Files/08.12.2005-EN-FINAL-Law%20on%20Broadcasting%20Activity.doc>

