[BA] Draft Changes and Amendments to the Broadcasting Code of Practice

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The Council of the Communications Regulatory Agency (RAK), at its September session, has decided to hold public consultations on draft changes and amendments to the Broadcasting Code of Practice.

The original version of the Broadcasting Code of Practice was adopted in 1998 and has since been changed and amended in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2004. The new draft brings substantial changes in line with the basic principles of the EU with regard to the broadcasting sector. Unlike the existing Code which comprises only five brief chapters and a dozen paragraphs and sections, the new Draft consists of 35 paragraphs. Most attention was paid to requirements and standards prescribed by the European Convention on Transfrontier Television and the EC Television without Frontiers Directive. Both the Convention and the Directive create a mechanism that provides an international framework for the unhindered cross border circulation of television programmes.

The main novelty in the Draft Code is the protection of minors, in particular regarding reporting on crimes involving minors. The Draft Code also includes, for the first time, regulations on the protection of privacy, on drug abuse, on tobacco products and alcohol beverages, regarding the portrayal of violence, sex and nudity, as well as an obligation on the broadcasters to inform their viewers prior to the broadcast of certain sensitive content. It further contains regulations on the reporting of court procedures, and on European audiovisual works.

Since transparency is required in the performance of the national regulatory authorities, including public debates on important documents and instruments, the RAK has decided to hold public consultations on this draft Code. The closing date for the submission of comments, recommendations or suggestions is 5 November 2007.

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Draft Code

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