[BG] Bill for Amendments to the Radio and Television Act Driven by Future Digitalisation

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According to paragraph 4, item 1 of the Final and Transitional Provisions of the Electronic Communications Act (ECA) the relevant provisions of the Radio and Television Act (RTA) regarding digital licensing should have been amended in compliance with the rules of the new ECA not later than six months after the entry into force of the ECA. The ECA became effective on 25 May 2007 and therefore the legislative term for the amendments to the RTA has not been adhered to.

At the beginning of 2008, the Ministry of Culture commenced the procedure for preparing a bill for amendments to the RTA (the "Bill"). The Ministry of Culture held public consultations with all concerned parties – the Council for Electronic Media, the State Information Technology and Communications Agency, the Communications Regulation Commission, the public operators (Bulgarian National Television and Bulgarian National Radio), the Bulgarian Radio and Television Operators Association and the Television Operators Association.

Most of the recommendations and proposals made by the parties concerned were adopted in the Bill. The statement of Working Group 18, Sub-group "Audio Vision", to the Ministry of Culture includes the following: "By adopting the present Bill the legislative requirement for bringing the RTA into compliance with the ECA shall be considered fulfilled. The Bill provides for a licensing and registration procedure of programmes for terrestrial digital transmission."

Pursuant to the Bill the following important amendments have to be made to the RTA:

- The Council for Electronic Media will be competent to issue licenses for radio and television programmes for broadcasting through the electronic communications network for terrestrial digital transmission;

- The public interest for transmission of the programmes of the public operators (Bulgarian National Television and Bulgarian National Radio) is guaranteed;

- The public register kept by the Council for Electronic Media shall also include the above-mentioned licenses issued by the Council for Electronic Media;

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- The terminology used in the RTA will be harmonised with the concepts used in the ECA.

The Bill was adopted by the Ministry of Culture at the beginning of April 2008. Now it has to be approved by the Council of Ministers in order to be submitted to the National Assembly.

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