[DE] Television rights for football sold to private television broadcaster

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The League Committee of the German Football Federation (DFB) has sold the contract with the international sport rights agency ISPR, which has links with the private television transmitter SAT.1, for initial broadcasting rights for federal league football matches until mid-2000 for the sum of approximately DEM 540 million. At the same time, the pay-TV transmitter PREMIERE has acquired broadcasting rights for live coverage up to June 1998.

A more lucrative offer from a bidding consortium consisting of ARD/ZDF and RTL was turned down. The exclusive sale of television rights for football to the private television broadcaster draws attention to Section 4 of the Agreement between the Länder on broadcasting (RuFuStV), which guarantees short coverage free of charge for any authorised television broadcaster in Europe, for its own broadcasting purposes. Section 4 of the RuFuStV corresponds to Article 9 of the European Agreement on transfrontier television, according to which, when exclusive rights are granted, each contracting party must ensure that the right of the public to information on significant events is respected. The provisions of Section 4 of the RuFuStV are of little relevance to the field of sport. Coverage of football events other than by virtue of exclusive rights takes place on the basis of paying for secondary commercialisation rights or under special agreements with the holders of rights, and is outside the present scope of the framework of short coverage set out in Section 4 of the RuFuStV.

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