[BG] Media Law Changes

IRIS 2008-10:1/9

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On 17 September 2008 the Parliamentary Commission on Media and Civil Society discussed the Draft Bill amending the Radio and Television Act as proposed by the Council of Ministers. The Draft Bill concerns amendments and supplementation to the Radio and Television Act, which will enable the process of digitalization in Bulgaria.

The Draft Bill limits certain powers of the Council for Electronic Media regarding the licensing of television operators and clearly determines the Communications Regulation Commission as the leading supervisory authority in the digitalization process. According to the Draft Bill the price offered by the multiplex operators would be the main criterion in the selection process and not the programme content.

On 16 September 2008 the Council for Electronic Media adopted a special declaration on the Draft Bill. The members of the Council for Electronic Media are of the opinion that the Draft Bill does not protect the public interest as the program content criterion is substituted mainly by technical and commercial terms.

The Draft Bill stipulates that the current analogue programs of the Bulgarian National Television, bTV and Nova Television will continue transmitting digitally without the need of participating in tender procedures, if they meet the following criteria:

1. the operator has been granted a programme licence for television activity with national coverage;

2. the operator transmits its programme via electronic communications networks for analogue transmission; and

3. the electronic communications networks shall cover at least 50 % of the population of the country.

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Draft Bill amending the Radio and Television Act

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