[CY] Plans for Digital Television Disclosed

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The government of the Republic of Cyprus publicised initial decisions on the introduction of terrestrial digital television on the island. According to informations released on 3 October 2008 by the Ministers of Interior and of Communications and Works, plans are on the way in order to meet the European Union deadline of complete digitalisation by 2012. Thus, all analogue broadcasts will cease in the course of 2011. Analogue and digital programmes will coexist for a couple of years.

Two terrestrial digital platforms are to be created; one will be leased to the public broadcaster Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CyBC) and one to the private sector. The terms and conditions of the lease, the company that will run the platform for private broadcasters and issues related to the costs, both of the passage to and the use of the digital platform are not decided yet. They are the object of consultation and discussion between competent authorities, which will also work on the draft of the relevant law. However, the government has decided to support low income families in covering the costs for new television sets or decoders.

In the framework of the digital shift, the role and competencies of the Cyprus Radio Television Authority, the broadcasting regulator, will be broadened and its name will be changed to the Audio-visual Media Services Authority. Further to its actual jurisdiction on broadcasters, the new entity’s powers will be extended to cover audio-visual services in general, both with pay and free access.

Cyprus lags behind both the introduction of digital technology and of a legal framework regulating digital and television services (subscription). Today, only LTV and Alpha which are pay-television broadcasters offer access to terrestrial digital television, while NOVA Cyprus, offers digital television services by satellite, using DTH (Direct to Home) technology.

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http://www.moi.gov.cy/MOI/pio/pio.nsf/All/02CCA6623176B313C22574D7004AD716?OpenDocument

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