[CZ] Broadcasting Act Amended

IRIS 2009-8:1/9

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The Czech Parliament has adopted an amendment to the Broadcasting Act, which is known to the public as the "digital radio amendment" and is designed to support radio digitisation. In fact, however, the amendment barely deals with the subject of digitisation and it remains largely unclear what radio digitisation will be like.

The amendment relaxes media concentration rules in the radio sector and redefines the concept of national radio stations. The latter are now defined as channels that can be received by at least 80% of the population, whereas previously the figure was 70%. Regional radio broadcasters holding several broadcasting licences were previously prohibited from broadcasting to more than 70% of the population under all their licences combined. This limit has been increased to 300%.

The amendment also permits programme regionalisation. Current channels are now allowed to broadcast regional or local windows (programmes, advertising and teleshopping) at certain times of the day, something which was previously prohibited. Up to 15% of programmes may be broadcast in this way. With the consent of the broadcasting regulator, radio broadcasters are allowed to transmit the programmes of another radio station.

Broadcasters that agree to support radio digitisation and give up their analogue frequencies are entitled to so-called transformation licences, which are valid until 2025.

In addition, amendments to broadcasters' ownership structures are now permitted. For example, a sole trader can transfer his licence to a legal entity if he owns 100% of the shares in that company. Legal entities which own 100% of the shares in several companies owned by a radio broadcaster may carry out mergers between these companies as long as they also own 100% of the shares in the new company.

Zákon č. 196/2009 Sb., kterým se mění zákon č. 231/2001 Sb., o rozhlasovém a televizním vysílání

http://portal.gov.cz/wps/portal/_s.155/701/.cmd/ad/.c/313/.ce/10821/.p/8411/_s.155/701?PC_8411_number1=196/2009&PC_8411_l=196/2009&PC_8411_ps=10#10821

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