[RU] Must-carry Channels Approved by President

IRIS 2009-10:1/25

Andrei Richter
Comenius University (Bratislava)

On 24 June 2009 President Dmitry Medvedev of the Russian Federation signed a decree " *Об общероссийских обязательных общедоступных телеканалах и радиоканалах* " (On National Mandatory Free Television Channels and Radio Stations).

The decree aims at "pursuing the objectives of ensuring freedom of information and guaranteeing that people everywhere in Russia will have access to information important for society". It sets out a list of television channels and radio stations that must be broadcast nationwide and free of charge.

The decree states that these channels and stations will be broadcast in mandatory fashion throughout the entire country, and at no cost to consumers. Broadcasting will be the responsibility of the State-owned enterprise, Russian Television and Radio Network (RTRS).

The decree also provides for the founding of a national television channel for children and the youth by 1 January 2011.

The list of eight mandatory free national TV channels includes seven State-run channels: Kultura (the culture channel), Sport, Vesti (news channel) and Rossia channel, which are all part of the All-Russian State Television and Radio Company (VGTRK), an as yet non-existent channel for children and youth, Channel One, Petersburg - Channel 5, as well as a private channel, NTV, owned by Gasprom-Media. The list of three mandatory radio stations includes Vesti FM, Radio Mayak and Radio Russia, all part of VGTRK. No public tender or competition was held in advance, nor was there any detailed explanation of why these particular channels were picked by the President.

These channels become must-carry all over Russia on all platforms and free for consumers. The TV channels shall comprise a common multiplex with the switch-over to digital television.

The Government of the Russian Federation shall be obliged to issue these channels with all necessary licenses and to subsidize their dissemination via analogue and digital means in those markets with a population of fewer than 200,000 (till 2011) and fewer than 100,000 (beginning in 2011).

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“Об общероссийских обязательных общедоступных телеканалах и радиоканалах”

Decree of the President On National Mandatory Free Television Channels and Radio Stations was published in the official daily Российская газета (Rossiyskaya gazeta) on 25 June 2009

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