[CY] Amendments to the Law on Radio and Television Broadcasting of 1998

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The main regulatory framework for broadcasting is the Law on Radio and Television Broadcasting N. 7(I)/1998 (see IRIS 2001-1/13) as amended up to 2009. The Law amended and consolidated the Laws N. 120/1990 and N. 29(I)/1992 on radio and television respectively. Its main objectives are to allow the establishment and operation of private commercial broadcasters; to ensure the editorial and creative independence of professionals in the broadcast media and to set requirements for safeguarding media pluralism. The most significant provision of the Law is the establishment of the Radio Television Authority, an independent body, to which the powers of media regulation were delegated, i.e. licensing, monitoring the operation of commercial broadcasting and others.

The initial Law incorporated the basic provisions of the Directive 89/552/EEC, in particular those relevant to the protection of minors, the duration and content of advertising, teleshopping and sponsorship, the promotion of European works and rules governing transfrontier broadcasts. The Law created the conditions for the establishment of commercial broadcasting, setting a dual system of public service and commercial broadcasting. A different law governed the operation of the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (Ραδιοφωνικό Ίδρυμα Κύπρου, RIK), the public service broadcaster. The provisions were limited to broadcasters licensed by the Radio Television Authority and only those using terrestrial analogue means. With the exception of licences for operating a limited coverage local radio, all licences can only be granted to companies with no one allowed to hold more than 25 percent of the capital share.

The first major amendment of the Law (Amending Law N. 23(I)/2000) was made in early 2000 in order to achieve compliance with the amending Directive 97/36/EC. A new amendment (Amending Law N. 134(I)/2000) came a few months later allowing a licensee listed in the stock exchange, changes in its share capital without prior permission of the Authority, provided that the shares held by the involved shareholder(s) remained below the ceiling of 5 percent of the licensee’s capital.

With the Amending Laws N. 53(I)/2001 and N. 97(I)/2004 major changes aimed at full harmonisation of the Law with the acquis communautaire, extending also the powers of the Radio and Television Authority to all broadcasters, including content

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control of the public service RIK. It also enabled the Authority to assume full responsibility on transfrontier broadcasts.

Further amendments from 2003 to 2009 provided for paid political advertising during presidential, parliamentary and European Parliament elections (N. 24(I)/2003, N. 85(I)/2006 and N.17(I)/2009, see IRIS 2005-1/18).

A number of regulations or Normative Administrative Acts (Κανονιστικές Διοικητικές Πράξεις, ΚΔΠ), voted also by the Parliament, regulate specific issues, such as the setting of an advisory body to the Radio Television Authority, the modalities of application of the coverage of elections, the coverage of major events, the details relevant to applications, technical and other requirements for granting a licence. The obligations of broadcasters in connection to content and rating of programmes and the procedures of investigation and decision making by the regulator are also part of the regulations.

Furthermore, the journalists' and the advertisers' codes of ethics were incorporated in regulations voted by the Parliament. However, the Authority has no power to examine issues related to the Journalistic Code of Ethics unless it is seized by the Ethics Committee set by the media professionals.

Ο Περί Ραδιοφωνικών και Τηλεοπτικών Σταθμών Νόμος 7(I)/98

http://www.crta.org.cy/documents/crta_new/nomos%20mas%202009.pdf

Law on Radio and Television Broadcasting N.7(I)/1998 (version of 2009)

Κανονιστικές Διοικητικές Πράξεις, ΚΔΠ 10/2000

Normative Administrative Acts concerning regulations incorporating the journalists' and the advertisers' codes of ethics, ΚΔΠ 10/2000, Official gazette of 28 January 2000

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