European Commission: Laggard Member States Urged to Implement AVMS Directive

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On 24 June 2010, the European Commission issued a set of reasoned opinions to 12 member states (Austria, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, and Slovenia) requesting that they proceed with updating their national broadcasting legislation in order to bring it into compliance with the Audiovisual Media Service (AVMS) Directive. The Directive, which replaced the Television without Frontiers Directive of 1989 (as amended), was adopted in December 1997 with the intention of bringing the EU's broadcasting rules up to speed with the digital age.

The deadline for the transposition of the Directive into the domestic legislation of the member states expired in December 2009. However, of the EU 27, only 3 countries had notified the Commission of full implementation by that date. The Commission reacted by sending requests for information in the form of letters of formal notice to 23 member states. In the meantime, 12 countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malta, The Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom) have responded, notifying the Commission of their moves to transpose the Directive into national law.

If the member states whose compliance is being sought fail to inform the Commission of measures to implement the Directive within a period of two months following the reasoned opinions, the Commission may decide to refer them to the European Court of Justice.

"Audiovisual Media Services Directive: Commission requests 12 Member States to implement in full", IP/10/803, Brussels, 24 June 2010

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