[AT] Court Finds ORF Guilty of Discriminating Against the Deaf

IRIS 2010-10:1/12

Anne Yliniva-Hoffmann
Institute of European Media Law (EMR), Saarbrücken/Brussels

According to media reports, the Bezirksgericht für Handelssachen (District Commercial Court) in Vienna ordered Österreichischer Rundfunk (Austrian broadcasting corporation - ORF) to pay compensation after finding it guilty of discriminating against the disabled at the end of September 2010.

The plaintiff in the case concerned, a deaf man, had purchased a DVD produced by ORF in 2009, but had not been able to understand it because it had not contained subtitles. Represented in the proceedings by the Austrian Klagsverband zur Durchsetzung der Rechte von Diskriminierungsopfern (association for the enforcement of the rights of victims of discrimination), he based his case on the Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz (Act on equal opportunities for disabled people - BGStG).

The court upheld the claim, ruling that ORF had an obligation to provide its services without barriers. It was reasonable from a financial point of view to expect the broadcaster to provide subtitles for the product. The lack of subtitles represented discrimination against the disabled.

The ruling is not yet final.

Pressemitteilung des Klagsverbands zur Durchsetzung der Rechte von Diskriminierungsopfern

http://www.klagsverband.at/archives/4387

Press release of the association for the enforcement of the rights of victims of discrimination

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026