[AT] ORF and Competition Authority Agree Compromise on Culture and Information Channel

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According to media reports, Österreichischer Rundfunk (Austrian public service broadcaster - ORF) and the Austrian competition authority agreed a compromise on 6 September 2011 in relation to ORF's culture and information channel (ORF III), and withdrew their respective objections filed with the Bundeskommunikationssenat (Federal Communications Board - BKS) against a decision of the Kommunikationsbehörde Austria (Austrian Communications Authority - KommAustria) of 18 May 2011 (see IRIS 2011-8/12).

Under the KommAustria decision, which has therefore entered into force, ORF is prohibited from advertising its new special interest channel on other ORF channels, apart from brief references to the channel's content. The ban also covers any ORF campaigns aimed at installing the new channel in the third, fourth or fifth slot on viewers' remote controls, directly below the two general channels ORF eins and ORF 2. ORF III will also not broadcast blockbusters or US sitcoms, nor show traditional advertising during evening prime-time hours at weekends and on bank holidays. Finally, the new channel must include the words "Kultur und Information" (Culture and Information) in its title.

ORF III is expected to be launched on 30 October 2011 and will be available via satellite, cable and DVB-T.

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