[IE] Approval of Funding Scheme for Broadcast Archiving

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The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) on 25 January 2012 announced that the funding scheme it had developed to support the archiving of broadcast material has been approved by the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

A funding scheme was provided for under s.154(1)(e) of the Broadcasting Act 2009. However, when approval was sought from the European Commission in 2010, the wording of section 154(1)(e) was found to be incompatible with EU state aid rules, as it related only to material produced in Ireland. In order to obtain EU approval and to ensure the non-discriminatory application of the scheme an amendment to s.154(1)(e) was made by the Communications Regulation (Postal Services) Act 2011. The legislative amendment further provided for the funding of technological and system developments for the purposes of enhancing the availability of and access to archived programme material.

The aim of the Scheme is to encourage and support the development of an archiving culture in the Irish broadcasting sector as a whole and to contribute to the preservation of Ireland's broadcasting heritage. Three objectives for the Scheme are outlined by the BAI in their announcement:

(i) to develop an integrated approach to the archiving of programme material to include the promotion, development and safeguarding of Ireland’s broadcasting heritage (this includes the promotion of the archiving of programme material which is of benefit to, and advances the standards of, Irish broadcasting);

(ii) to develop suitable storage processes and formats to encourage and assist bodies in the restoration and/or storage of material recorded on failing, or soon to be obsolete formats, and

(iii) to provide fast and accurate access to programme materials by interested parties and to raise public awareness in the preservation and use of broadcast archive materials.

The Scheme will be financed by a percentage of the annual Broadcasting Fund established pursuant to s.157 of the Broadcasting Act 2009 and is derived from the TV licence fee. EU approval for the Scheme runs until 31 December 2014 and the approval is for an overall budget of EUR 12.86m spread over the four years of

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the Scheme. The BAI will issue further information about the Scheme, including details on funding rounds, in the coming months and expects to announce a call for applications by the end of the second quarter of 2012.

Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI), "Broadcast Archiving Scheme is approved", 25 January 2012

http://www.bai.ie/?p=2109

European Commission, Approval of Irish Funding Scheme for the Archiving of Programme Material ("The Archiving Scheme"), Brussels, 27 June 2011, C(2011) 4679 final

http://ec.europa.eu/eu_law/state_aids/comp-2010/n394-10.pdf

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