[DE] Video on Demand Platform of the German Public Service Broadcasters

IRIS 2012-5:1/38

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According to media reports, on 25 April 2012 several subsidiaries of the television broadcaster Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF), various stations of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Union of German Public Service Broadcasters - ARD) and a number of television production companies set up the limited company Germany's Gold GmbH.

The corporate objective is the joint establishment and operation of a video-on-demand (VoD) platform, through which digitised content from the past 60 years of German and international film and television history is to be made available to viewers by the participating providers and third parties via satellite, cable, terrestrial broadcasting, the internet and other technologies. The platform is to be funded from individual on-demand payments, subscriptions and advertising.

On 28 November 2011, the Bundeskartellamt (Federal Cartel Office - BKartA) said it had no reservations about the public service broadcasters' joint venture under current merger control laws as the parties involved did not hold a dominant position on the market and would not do so after they had joined forces. However, it went on, irrespective of its assessment under those laws it would be examining the question of a possible breach of antitrust law.

According to the plans made public so far, the VoD platform is due to become operational (probably under another name) at the end of 2012.

In March 2011, the authority turned down a comparable plan by the private broadcasting groups ProSiebenSat1 and RTL on merger control grounds (see IRIS 2011-5/15).

Pressemitteilung der WDR Mediagroup, 25. April 2012

http://www.presseportal.de/pm/59521/2241050/germany-s-gold-gmbh-in-berlin-gegruendet-start-des-vod-portals-fruehestens-ende-des-jahres-geplant

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