[FI] Act on Audiovisual Programmes and Act on the Finnish Centre for Media Education and Audiovisual Media

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In June 2011, the Finnish Parliament adopted Kuvaohjelmalaki 710/2011 (Act on audiovisual programmes) and Laki Mediakasvatus- ja kuvaohjelmakeskuksesta 711/2011 (Act on the Finnish Centre for Media Education and Audiovisual Media). The Acts entered into force on 1 January 2012.

The Act on audiovisual programmes restricts the provision of audiovisual programmes in order to protect children. The Act applies to audiovisual programme provision and its supervision in Finland, if the programmes are provided by television operations or by on-demand services subject to the Act on Television and Radio Operations (744/1998), or by other providers who operate/function in Finland.

According to the Act on audiovisual programmes, an audiovisual programme provider must notify Mediakasvatus- ja kuvaohjelmakeskus (the Finnish Centre for Media Education and Audiovisual Media - MEKU) when beginning to provide audiovisual programmes. The notification must be submitted if programmes are provided for economic purposes and on a regular basis. No notification is needed if the programmes provided are exempt from classification.

The supervision of audiovisual programme provision and the coordination and promotion of national media education are handled by MEKU, which is subject to the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The Finnish Centre for Media Education and Audiovisual Media shall:

1) promote media education, children’s media skills and the development of a safe media environment for children in cooperation with other authorities and corporations in the sector;

2) act as an expert in the development of the children's media environment and promote research related to the sector, as well as monitor international development in the field;

3) distribute information about children and the media;

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4) take charge of the education and refresher training of audiovisual programme classifiers;

Audiovisual programmes supplied in Finland must be classified unless exempt from classification. An audiovisual programme may only be classified by a classifier trained and approved by MEKU as well as by MEKU´s officials. Programmes exempt from classification are for example those that include only educational material, music, sport, cultural events, religious services or other similar events or topical news issues.

Audiovisual programmes are considered to be detrimental to the development of children if, by virtue of violent or sexual content or elements causing anxiety or any other comparable features, they are likely to detrimentally affect children's development. When assessing the detrimental nature of a programme, the context and manner in which the programme's events are described must be taken into consideration. If an audiovisual programme is detrimental to the development of children, it shall be classified according to an age limit of 7, 12, 16 or 18, depending on the programme’s content, and be given a symbol that describes the programme content. If there is no reason to consider the programme to be detrimental to the development of children, it shall be classified as suitable for all ages.

Kuvaohjelmalaki 17.6.2011/710

http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/2011/20110710

Act on Audiovisual Programmes, Act No. 710, of 17 June 2011

http://www.meku.fi/images/kuvaohjelmalaki_710_2011_en.pdf

Laki Mediakasvatus- ja kuvaohjelmakeskuksesta 17.6.2011/711

http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/2011/20110711

Act on the Finnish Centre for Media Education and Audiovisual Programmes, Act No. 711, of 17 June 2011

http://www.meku.fi/images/meku_laki_711_2011_en.pdf

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