[DE] Bremen City Parliament Adopts Media Act

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The new *Bremische Mediengesetz* (Bremen Media Act) entered into force on 26 July 2012. The Act, introduced by the coalition just last May, was unanimously adopted by all parties represented in Bremen's city parliament in a procedure lasting just seven weeks. It was thought necessary to take the final vote before the summer break so that the Act could enter into force in time for the *Medienrat* (Media Council) to be appointed in its newly prescribed composition rather than under the previous legal provisions.

One of the objectives of the new Media Act is to make the activities of the *Bremische Landesmedienanstalt* (Bremen *Land* Media Office - brema) more transparent. In future, therefore, its meetings must, in principle, be held in public and all decisions and attendance lists must be published on the Internet, along with the salary of the brema's director.

The composition of the *Landesrundfunkausschuss* (*Land* Broadcasting Committee), which was renamed the *Medienrat* (Media Council) under the new Act, has also been amended. For the first time, the body responsible for licensing and monitoring private broadcasters will include a student representative, a representative of a self-help association for disabled persons and a Muslim representative, who will be jointly appointed by Bremen's three Muslim associations. In addition, all associations represented in the Media Council will themselves be able to appoint their representatives from now on. This measure is designed to give it greater autonomy from the State; previously, most members of the *Landesrundfunkausschuss* were chosen by the city parliament.

Membership of the Media Council is now limited to a maximum of 12 years. After the government's original plan to reduce the size of the Media Council from 26 to 24 members was publicly criticised, it was decided to increase the number of members to 30. However, this measure has attracted strong criticism, both from the opposition and from the government coalition. In contrast, a broad consensus greeted the expansion of the brema's remit to include improved coordination of *Land*-wide initiatives designed to promote media literacy.

In addition to these rules on the composition of the Media Council and various aspects of the brema's activities, the new *Bremische Mediengesetz* includes new provisions for private broadcasters. For example, they are required to offer more

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North German content as well as better access for persons with disabilities. They must also ensure that their programmes serve the interests of migrants in a sustainable way. Although private radio and television providers argued that this interfered with their programming freedom and risked levelling out the differences between public and private broadcasters, the chairman of the city parliament committee responsible for the new Act defended the government's desire to remind programme providers of their responsibilities and ensure that they took these interests into account.

A working group was set up to reform community broadcasting, for which the brema is also responsible. However, contrary to the agreements reached by the government coalition concerning its further development, no reforms have yet been implemented.

Bremisches Landesmediengesetz (BremLMG) vom 17. Juli 2012

http://www.vprt.de/sites/default/files/documents/Bremisches%20Landesmediengesetz%20%28BremLMG%29%20%2817.07.2012%29_korr.pdf

Bremen Land Media Act of 17 July 2012

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