[CY] Extensive Amendments Proposed for Act on Radio Television Organisations

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A bill sent to the House of Representatives by the government proposes extensive amendments to the Law on Radio and Television Organisations that regulates commercial services of broadcasters. The bill was long expected in order to adjust the Act to aspects of the new media - i.e. a fully digital environment - and to further harmonise the Act with the Audiovisual Media Services Directive 2010/13/EU (AVMSD).

According to the Explanatory Memorandum attached to the proposal, better harmonisation with the AVMSD is sought, in particular with relation to Articles 2(4), 4(8), 5(1)(d), 6, 9(1)(f), 10(1), 11(1), 11(2), 11(3)(c), 13, 18, 19, 23-25 and 27. A table listing the correspondence of Articles of AVMSD and of the Act is provided with the Explanatory Memorandum.

Changes foreseen in the proposal are in particular:

- New types of licences will be added in Article 14 of the Act in order to cover all forms of audiovisual media services.

- Providers of audiovisual media services under Cypriot jurisdiction will need authorisation by the regulator (Cyprus Radio Television Authority) in case they wish to include in their services programmes that are produced by an organisation from a State abroad, not being under Cypriot jurisdiction.

- The duration of licences for television services will be one year - instead of ten, as formerly - while the seven year duration for radio licences (that have not yet switched over to digital transmission) would remain unchanged.

- A new Article 25a will regulate the details for the withdrawal of authorisations of providers of audiovisual media services.

- Broader and better protection will be sought for minors in terms of minors as both viewers and participants in programmes. Moreover, new provisions will be inserted foreseeing measures against discrimination, terrorism, xenophobia, pedophilia and protection of the environment.

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- Fair treatment of political parties and candidates will be stipulated. Political communication will be regulated and extended to cover municipal and local elections as well.

Further to the above amendments, the bill foresees the abolishment of the Radio Television Advisory Committee, in which professional and other social and scientific bodies, the audiovisual media service providers and government services were represented in order to coordinate aspects of media law in a non-binding manner. The reason given is that “the Committee was unable to function”.

The Code of Journalistic Ethics appended to the “Regulations - Normative Administrative Acts, KDP 10/2000” will be abrogated and most of its provisions as other provisions in the Regulations will be incorporated into the Act on Radio and Television Organisation.

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http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/gpo/gpo.nsf/All/F71A8ECC327AC776C2257BDC002C2A72?OpenDocument

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