[LV] Electronic Media Council Suggests Amendments to Media Act

IRIS 2013-10:1/33

Ieva Andersone
Sorainen, Latvia

On 4 October 2013, the Nacionālā elektronisko plašsaziņas līdzekļu padome (NEPLP - National Electronic Mass Media Council), the Latvian media regulator, published its proposals for amendments to the Latvian Electronic Media Act (EMA). The NEPLP prepared the amendments within an internal working group established to implement the "National Strategy for the development of the electronic media within the years 2012-2017". As an executive body, NEPLP does not have legislative initiative rights. Hence, NEPLP submitted its proposal to the responsible Commission of Human Rights and Social Affairs of Saeima (Latvian Parliament) to be assessed and prepared as a legislative proposal.

The most extensive changes proposed provide the NEPLP with the rights to receive full information on media ownership and true beneficiaries. Such information would have to be submitted upon registration of a new electronic media service provider as well as in case of changes in media ownership. The proposal argues that this is necessary to improve media transparency in Latvia.

Furthermore, the proposal suggests that NEPLP be granted the merger control right in the case of media mergers. Currently, mergers between media are controlled by the Competition Council if they reach the merger notification criteria specified in the Competition Law. There is no special procedure for the review of media mergers. On the basis of criteria different from the Competition Law and including media diversity as well as public health and security, the mergers should be reviewed by the media regulatory authority. The NEPLP would accordingly have the right to prohibit the merger or allow it with the option to set up binding commitments. It would also have the right to impose a financial penalty in the amount of up to LVL 1,000 (~ EUR 1,420) per day for a failure to notify the merger to the NEPLP.

The proposal also includes amendments to the NEPLP's powers to annul the broadcasting or retransmission licence. The rules are specified and shaped in a more proportional manner.

Another potentially far-reaching proposal is the requirement to provide Latvian subtitles for all television programmes in foreign languages. Currently, the broadcasters are free to choose how to provide the translation for programmes in

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

foreign languages - be it by means of subtitling, dubbing, or recording. Only dubbed and recorded programmes are currently taken into account for the mandatory Latvian language quota applicable to national and regional terrestrial broadcasters. Moreover, subtitling is not allowed for the first channel of the public service broadcaster. The amendments aim to improve the knowledge of foreign languages within Latvian society and to provide equal translation terms for all foreign language broadcasts. Currently, the broadcasts in Russian language are mostly subtitled whereas other languages are dubbed.

The promotion of the Latvian language is also contained in the proposal to introduce new regulations for cable operators. The proposed amendments foresee that the cable operators should inform the NEPLP about the basic package of channels, which must be available for all subscribers. The act would also prescribe the main requirements for the channels, which must be included in these basic packages (including public service broadcasting channels and national commercial broadcasters).

Likumu grozījumu sagatavošana

http://www.neplpadome.lv/lv/sakums/normativie-akti/likumu-grozijumu-sagatavosana.html

Proposals for amendments to the Electronic Media Act

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026