[BG] bTV Media Group to withdraw two of its programs from a digital multiplex

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Since the beginning of 2013 the bTV Media Group EAD decision-makers have decided to broadcast by means of the digital network one of its programmes, namely bTV Lady+1, and further in October 2013 another of its programmes, namely Ring.bg+1. '+1' means that the TV programme shall be broadcast free-to-air one hour later than the broadcasting in the paid distributors.

At its meeting of 25 March 2014, the съвет за електронни медии (Council for Electronic Media - CEM) agreed to hear the Media Group EAD decision-makers with regard to their request to withdraw from terrestrial digital distribution its abovementioned programmes. The Chief Executive Director of the company presented arguments before the CEM that "in a situation where the Bulgarian advertising market has decreased by 40% in the last five years, it is extremely difficult to keep in operation a channel with a niche audience".

According to Article 121 (1) (4) of the Radio and Television Act, the CEM may not refuse to terminate any licence upon a request of the holder.

On the basis of various arguments, the CEM has on several occasions delayed the making of the final decision in that regard. The last occasion was on 25 April 2014, when the CEM stated that it will rule definitively on the matter after the meeting of the managing committee of the digital television body scheduled on 15 May 2014.

The CEM denial to terminate the licences shall be challenged by the media, as stated: "bTV Media Group has initiated proceedings to challenge the silent refusal before the Supreme administrative court of Bulgaria".

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Position of the Council for Electronic Media (CEM), 25 April 2014

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