[IE] Review of designated free-to-air sporting events

IRIS 2014-7:1/26

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The Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources announced on 16 June 2014 that he intends to review the current list of sports and other events designated for coverage on free-to-air television. Submissions are invited from members of the public and interested parties on the current list of events and the possible designation of additional events.

Section 162 of the Broadcasting Act 2009 provides that the Minister may, by order, designate events of major importance to society, coverage of which can be provided by free-to-air broadcasters in the public interest. Under the Act the Minister may also determine whether coverage should be available on a live, deferred or both live and deferred basis. The events currently designated are all sporting events (IRIS 2011-7/26) and the list is unchanged since 2003:

On a live basis

- The Summer Olympics.

- The All-Ireland Senior Football and Hurling Finals.

- Ireland’s qualifying games in the European Football Championship and World Cup.

- Opening games, semi-finals and final of the European Football Championship Finals and the FIFA World Cup Finals Tournament.

- The Irish Grand National and the Irish Derby (Horse-racing).

- The Nations Cup at the Dublin Horse Show.

On a deferred basis

- Ireland’s games in the Six Nations Rugby Football Championship.

The Minister is required, under section 173 of the Act, to undertake a review of the list of designated events every three years. The current review follows a controversial deal between the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) - Ireland’s largest sporting and cultural organisation (which deals with Gaelic sports) - and Sky Sports for exclusive coverage of a number of games in the All-Ireland Senior

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Football and Hurling Championships. The deal that was announced in April 2014 runs for a three-year period and provides for the first time that high profile GAA games will not be available free-to-air in Ireland.

The closing date for receipt of submissions is 1 August 2014. To designate an event, the Minister must have regard to a number of criteria, in particular the extent to which the event has a special general resonance for the people of Ireland, and the extent to which the event has a generally recognised distinct cultural importance for the people of Ireland.

Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources - Press Release, Minister Rabbitte announces review of TV coverage of Designated Sporting and Other Events, 16 June 2014

http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Press+Releases/2014/Minister+Rabbitte+announces+review+of+TV+coverage+of+Designated+Sporting+and+Other+Events.htm

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