[ME] First Multiplex Operator licensed

IRIS 2014-8:1/31

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The Montenegrin Public Enterprise Radio-difuznom centru (Broadcasting Centre - BC) has promoted the national operator of the first multiplex for digital terrestrial broadcasting ("operator"), which presents an important prerequisite for completion of the process of digitalisation in the country. On 19 June, the approval for the provision of on demand audiovisual media services was issued to the BC by the Agency for Electronic Media. These services include distribution of catalogues of radio and TV programmes to the end-users. The operator is required to provide coverage of 85% of the population by 17 December 2014.

In the first phase, the catalogue of the first multiplex will include two television and two radio programmes of the national public broadcaster "Radio Television of Montenegro", whose Broadcasting Centre is obliged to distribute the programmes at no charge, through free access. Other commercial television channels will be able to exercise their right of access to the first multiplex after the announcement of public tender in the second half of 2014.

With this prerequisite fulfilled, Montenegro is hoping to finish the process of digitalization by June 2015, as envisaged by the EU and the Montenegrin law on broadcasting.

The National Digital Switchover Strategy was adopted in 2008, but the process of digitalisation has been postponed several times due to the lack of financial and institutional capacities. The procurement of digital TV broadcasting equipment in Montenegro has been funded by the Delegation of the European Union in 2011, but the equipment was not operational until late 2013, due to complaints and a lawsuit alleging misconduct by the EU Delegation during the tender procedure. The complaints were solved in favour of the EU Delegation, but have caused significant delay in project implementation.

1. RDC Odobrenje za AVM usluge br. O-AVMD-10

http://www.ardcg.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=1150&Itemid=26

Approval for the provision of audiovisual media services

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Press release of the EU delegation in Montenegro,"Support to the digitalization of the Montenegrin public broadcasting - supply of equipment", 28 March 2014

http://www.delmne.ec.europa.eu/code/navigate.php?Id=2657

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