[IE] Minister Designates New Television Channel as a Public Service

IRIS 2015-4:1/14

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On 2 December 2014, the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources signed an order designating a new television channel, UTV Ireland, as a public service under the Broadcasting Act 2009. On 1 January 2015 the channel began broadcasting free-to-air in Ireland. UTV Ireland will be a general entertainment channel and its schedule includes a nightly news and current affairs programme.

In November 2013, UTV Ireland applied for a licence under section 71 of the Broadcasting Act 2009, which allows the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland to grant a television "content provision contract". On 27 February 2014, the Authority signed a ten-year television contract with UTV Ireland (see IRIS 2014-4/21).

UTV Ireland also submitted a request to the Minister for a designation as a public service, under section 130(1)(a)(iv) of the Broadcasting Act in June 2014, and the Minister has now published his decision, approving the request. The Minister took into account a range of factors, including the range and variety of programming, the contribution to democratic and public engagement, and support for local production and investment in local talent. The designation means that UTV Ireland will be available on SAORVIEW, the free-to-air digital terrestrial television service (see IRIS 2014-2/25).

Broadcasting Act 2009 (Section 130(1)(a)(iv) Designation) Order 2014, S.I. No. 542/2014

http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2014/en/si/0542.html

Decision of the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources Regarding the Request from UTV Ireland for Designation under Section 130(1)(a)(iv), Broadcasting Act 2009, 1 December 2014

http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/NR/rdonlyres/4B03E5A8-0C0E-42AA-8301-4B410B9D2845/0/2014_12_01DecisionofMinisterforCommunications.pdf

Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, "BAI Signs Content Contract with 'UTV Ireland", 27 February 2014

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http://www.bai.ie/index.php/2014/02/bai-signs-content-contract-with-utv-ireland/

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