

[ES] Changes in the sale of audiovisual rights to transmit football

IRIS 2015-7:1/10

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The Spanish government approved on 1 May a Royal Decree governing the commercialisation of audiovisual rights over broadcast football matches, as well as the distribution of the income generated. Already passed as law by Parliament, it will come into effect in 2016.

One of the main sources of income for the clubs that participate in the First and Second Division of the Spanish Football League is the sale of TV rights to the Football League (Campeonato Nacional de Liga de Primera y Segunda División), known as “La Liga”, and the National Cup (Supercopa de España). The Professional Football League (Liga Nacional de Fútbol Profesional - LPF) managed these audiovisual rights until the 1997/1998 season, when each club began to negotiate their own rights (see IRIS 2013-5/21). This led to very different earnings between top and small clubs and to many legal battles among those who hold the rights, broadcasters and football clubs (see IRIS 2007-10/16 and IRIS 2011-10/13).

The new legislation reorganises the current football audiovisual rights market, establishing with a high level of detail that: (a) the rights to transmit games will be pooled and sold collectively again. The LPF will manage those rights related to “La Liga” and the Royal Spanish Football Federation (Real Federación Española de Fútbol - RFEF) those of the National Cup and the King’s Cup (Copa de S. M. el Rey); (b) the distribution of the income generated will be shared among clubs following criteria such as performance and size. Of total revenue, 90% will go to first division clubs and the remaining 10% to second division clubs; and (c) once compensated, each club must contribute mandatorily to a Compensation Fund to support policies formulated by the LPF, RFEF and the National Sports Council.

The National Commission for Markets and Competition (Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia - CNMC) will have the leading role in supervising agreements.

Real Decreto-ley 5/2015, de 30 de abril, de medidas urgentes en relación con la comercialización de los derechos de explotación de contenidos audiovisuales de las competiciones de fútbol profesional

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