[DE] Youth channel planned by ARD and ZDF confirmed by signing of 19th Amendment to the Inter-State Broadcasting Agreement

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The 19. Rundfunkänderungsstaatsvertrag (19th Amendment to the Inter-State Broadcasting Agreement - RÄStV) was signed on 3 December 2015. The Länder heads of government decided to adopt the amendment, which focuses on youth programmes and youth media, at their annual conference on 8/9 October 2015. Desspite the fears of a licence fee-funded distortion of competition expressed by the Verband Privater Rundfunk und Telemedien (Association of Commercial Broadcasters and Telemedia - VPRT), the signing of the agreement paves the way for the online-based range of youth programmes planned by ARD and ZDF. The agreement is scheduled to come into force on 1 October 2016.

Owing to the steadily rising average age of viewers and the resulting “separation of the generations”, the public service broadcasters ARD and ZDF want to introduce an “only online” range of youth programme, which they plan to launch for 14 to 29 year olds on third-party online platforms. In view of the change in younger viewers’ consumption behaviour, it is hoped that this will ensure that the public service broadcasters can also fulfil their programming remit in the future. The youth channel will provide a mixture of information, pop culture and lifestyle subjects, education, fiction, comedy, game shows and events. In order to be able to produce this offering on a cost-neutral basis, the channels EinsPlus and ZDFkultur are to be discontinued.

The agreement also focuses on better protection for young people in the media world. The planned changes to the Jugendmedienschutzstaatsvertrag (Inter-State Agreement on the Protection of Minors in the Media) will also result in its provisions being brought into line with the rules of federal and EU law. For example jugendschutz.net, the joint youth-protection body of the Länder set up by the Oberste Landesjugendbehörden (Supreme State Youth Authorities) and for which the plan has so far been only to provide funding on a temporary basis, is to be given permanent funding by the Länder. Furthermore, the policy-making and procedural powers of the voluntary self-regulation bodies are to be strengthened.

Entwurf des 19. Rundfunkänderungsstaatsvertrages

https://www.bremische-buergerschaft.de/drs_abo/2015-10-21_Drs-19-118_f61d6.pdf

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