

[AL] Regulator issues four commercial national digital licenses

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On 3 November 2016 and 29 December 2016, after a long impasse in the digital switchover process, the Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA) issued four of five licenses for national terrestrial digital networks.

The decisions came after two parallel and successful legal battles of commercial operators to abolish the legal limitations for ownership of shares in national media companies, as well as opposing previous administrative decision of AMA, which failed to grant digital licenses to any of the applicants. On 13 May 2016, the Constitutional Court of Albania notified that it had ruled in favour of the request filed to this court by the Association of Albanian Electronic Media seeking to abrogate paragraph 3 of Article 62 of the Law 97/2013 "On Audiovisual Media in the Republic of Albania" regarding limitations for media ownership (see IRIS 2016-7/6).

Three months earlier, on 7 March 2016, the Administrative Court had ruled in favour of granting a national digital license to Digitalb, while ordering AMA to change its decision and grant a national digital license also to TV Klan and Top Channel TV. Both these decisions paved the way for the licensing of the main contenders for digital national terrestrial licenses.

Following the court rulings, AMA executed the Administrative Court decision and granted licenses for using the national digital terrestrial networks to TV Klan and Top Channel on 3 November 2016. On the same day, the regulator also started the call for applications for the two remaining national networks.

On 29 December 2016, AMA decided to grant the fourth national license to Media Vizion company. The fifth and last national digital terrestrial network has yet to be awarded. At the end of December 2016, AMA decided not to grant it to another applicant, while concluding that the other applicants (ADTN company, ABC News, Tring TV, and ORA companies) did not qualify for the license. The granting of the national digital network licenses to private operators came after long disputes and after the official deadline set for the digital switchover, namely 17 June 2015.

Njoftim per media 03-11-2016

<http://ama.gov.al/preview/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Njoftim-per-media-03-11->

2016.pdf

The decisions of the Audiovisual Media Authority from 3 November 2016

Njoftim per Media 29-12-2016

<http://ama.gov.al/preview/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Njoftim-per-Media-date-29-12-2016.pdf>

The decision of the Audiovisual Media Authority from 29 December 2016

