[DE] Draft amendment of Telecommunications Act to strengthen digital radio

IRIS 2017-7:1/15

Bianca Borzucki
Institute of European Media Law (EMR), Saarbrücken/Brussels

On 3 May 2017, the Bundeskabinett (Federal Cabinet) adopted the draft Fourth Amendment of the Telecommunications Act (TKG-RefE), which is designed to promote radio digitisation.

Article 48 of the Telecommunications Act (TKG) is expanded under the draft, with the new Article 48(4) TKG-RefE stipulating that every new reception device made available for sale, rental or distribution by other means, if it is primarily intended for the reception of radio broadcasts and can display the name of the radio station, must be equipped with at least one interface that meets recognised technological standards and enables the user to receive and play digital content. The amendment therefore requires an interface to be provided, but does not specify a particular form of digital radio technology. Manufacturers can use both DAB+ and Internet radio, for example. The obligation only applies to devices with a digital display that can show the station's name; this is designed to ensure that the new rule only applies to higher-quality products. The fact that the rule only applies to devices primarily intended for the reception of radio broadcasts means that smartphones and tablets are excluded. Car radios, on the other hand, are subject to Article 48(4) TKG-RefE.

Under the new Article 48(5) TKG-RefE, reception devices brought into circulation before the amendment enters into force can continue to be offered for sale for a further 12 months after its entry into force.

According to its explanatory memorandum, the purpose of the draft amendment is to promote radio digitisation through the sale of suitable reception devices. The new rules should support radio digitisation and device sales across all digital transmission technologies. They should give the radio manufacturing industry sufficient time to change their production processes and to sell the devices that have already been produced.

Referentenentwurf des Bundesministeriums für Wirtschaft und Energie

https://www.bmwi.de/Redaktion/DE/Downloads/P-R/referentenentwurf-viertes-gesetz-aenderung-telekommunikationsgesetz.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=8

Draft Act of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026