# [BE] New audiovisual legislation in Brussels

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It is sometimes forgotten than Belgium's complex institutional organisational structure in respect of audiovisual matters is not made up only of the country's three linguistic communities (the French-, Flemish- and German-speaking sections of the population). A few areas of responsibility have been retained by the federal (that is to say, national) authorities; these include audiovisual matters in the bilingual region of Brussels-Capital - an area that is home to nearly 1.2 million people; Brussel's French- and Flemish-speaking communities do have some responsibilities, but only with regard to those institutions whose activities connect them exclusively to one or other community. Thus, for example, the two main public services are located in neighbouring buildings in Brussels: the Belgian public service broadcaster RTBF is dependent on the French-speaking community, whereas the Vlaamse Regulator voor de Media (Flemish Regulator for the Media) (VRT) is dependent on the Flemish-speaking community.

On 30 March 1995 the Parliament enacted legislation regulating the audiovisual scene in Brussels. The legislation affected in particular cable distributors in Brussels (which were of course not connected exclusively to one or other of the communities); it also theoretically covered bilingual radio stations and television channels, as well as stations and channels broadcasting in languages other than Belgium's official languages. This resulted in the necessity for audiovisual media services that were based in Brussels but whose services were directed at audiences in non-European countries to apply to the national postal and telecom authority (Institut Belge des Services Postaux et des Télécommunications) for authorisation to carry out their activities, since it is the regulator of electronic communications and the postal service that serves as the regulator of audiovisual media services in the Brussels region.

A new law of 5 May 2017 on audiovisual media services in the bilingual Brussels region (published in the Moniteur Belge on 23 May 2017) has replaced the 1995 Act. It does not make any major changes to the substance of the legislation, but it does enable Belgium to fully transpose throughout the country European Directives on networks and audiovisual media services.

***Loi relative aux services de médias audiovisuels en région bilingue de Bruxelles-Capitale, 5 mai 2017***

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http://reflex.raadvst-consetat.be/reflex/pdf/Mbbs/2017/05/23/136084.pdf

*Law on audiovisual media services in the bilingual Brussels-Capital region, 5 May 2017*

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