[CY] Television temporary licences extended for one year to June 2018

IRIS 2017-8:1/11

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The operation of audiovisual media service providers will continue with temporary licences until the end of June 2018. This is provided by Law 81(I)/2017, which amends the Basic Law on Radio and Television Organisations L. 7(I)/1998, published in the Official Gazette on 30 June 2017; the law amends Article 56 of the Basic Law and authorises the Radio Television Authority to extend the validity of television licences for all operating service providers for one more year. Following the switchover to digital television in July 2011, temporary licences for digital transmission replaced the licences for analogue transmission, initially valid until 30 June 2012. While waiting for amendments to Basic Law 7(I)/1998 that would respond to the conditions of the new environment, temporary licences have since then been renewed each year. Thus, temporality is now extended until 30 June 2018. Under the Basic Law, normal television licences are valid for ten years.

Under the same amending law, temporary licences to legal entities of public law are also extended for one year, even in the event that they do not meet all the requirements set out by law; this is applicable to CYTA (the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority - Αρχή Τηλεπικοινωνιών Κύπρου), a semi-governmental organisation that operates IPTV. Its capital share and structure as a legal entity of public law deviates from the model set by the Basic Law, which requires, among other things, capital share dispersion and a ceiling of 25% for shareholders. After having operated in an analogue environment which was unregulated for online providers, CYTA benefits from a special provision and has been operating in the digital environment since 2011.

The amending law authorises the Radio Television Authority to issue temporary licences to new applicants; these licences are also valid until the aforementioned date.

It is noteworthy that the Basic Law has undergone no major amendment since December 2010, when provisions of the AVMS Directive were incorporated into the national law of Cyprus. In June 2017, the relevant parliamentary committee noted in its report to the Plenary of the House of Representatives that the extension of temporary licences was required pending major amendments to the basic law that would adapt it to the new environment and make permanent licences possible. No details are available of the timing of the expected amendments.

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Αριθμός 81(I) του 2017 - ΝΟΜΟΣ ΠΟΥ ΤΡΟΠΟΠΟΙΕΙ ΤΟΥΣ ΠΕΡΙ ΡΑΔΙΟΦΩΝΙΚΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΗΛΕΟΠΤΙΚΩΝ ΟΡΓΑΝΙΣΜΩΝ ΝΟΜΟΥΣ ΤΟΥ 1998 ΕΩΣ 2017

http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2017_1_081.pdf

Amending Law 81(I)/2017 of the Law on Radio and Television Organisations 7(I)/1998

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