[IE] Minister announces new designated free-to-air sporting events

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Ingrid Cunningham
School of Law, National University of Ireland, Galway

On 23 August 2017, the Minister for Communications, Climate action and Environment, Mr Denis Naughten, announced the designation of the All-Ireland Senior Ladies Gaelic and Camogie (team sport played by women similar to hurling) Finals as “events of major importance to society”. The designation ensures that these sporting events “remain available on a free-to-air and live basis” for Irish television audiences.

The European Union’s Audiovisual Media Services Directive 2010/13/EU, allows member states to designate certain sporting and cultural events as being of major importance to society and to provide that those designated events should continue to be available on free-to-air television. The Directive requires member states to provide national legislation as the statutory basis for designating events. Section 162 of the Broadcasting Act 2009 provides that a Minister “may by order, designate events as events of major importance to society”, coverage of which can be provided by free-to-air broadcasters in the public interest. Under section 162 of the Act, the Minister may also determine whether the coverage should be available on a live, deferred or both live and deferred basis. In May 2015, the Minister for Communications announced a public consultation on the possible designation of additional sports events on free-to-air television under section 163 of the Act (see IRIS 2015-6/22). In deciding whether to designate certain events, the Act further provides that the Minister must have regard to a number of criteria, “in particular” the extent to which the event has a “special general resonance” and “a generally recognised distinct cultural importance” for the people of Ireland. Section 173 of the Broadcasting Act 2009 provides that a review process of designated events is undertaken every three years (see, for example, IRIS 2011-7/26).

The Minister stated that he had “always been adamant that ladies’ football and camogie be treated equally with men’s football and hurling” and that the “announcement recognises that equality.” He added that the “designation of these events is also an acknowledgment of the valuable contribution that the representative associations make to women’s sport throughout Ireland.” The other sporting events currently designated include the Summer Olympics; the All-Ireland Senior Inter-County Football and Hurling Finals; Ireland’s home and away qualifying games in the European Football Championship and the FIFA World Cup Tournaments; Ireland’s games in the European Football Championship Finals

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Tournament and the FIFA World Cup Finals Tournament; Ireland's games in the Rugby World Cup Finals Tournament; the Irish Grand National and the Irish Derby; and the Nations Cup at the Dublin Horse Show

Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, "Minister designates Ladies Gaelic Football and Camogie Finals as 'events of major importance to Irish Society'", 23 August 2017

http://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/news-and-media/press-releases/Pages/Minister-Naughten-designates-Ladies-Gaelic-Football-and-Camogie-Finals-as-'events-of-major-importance'.aspx

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