[CY] Extension of Temporary Television Licences for one Year to June 2022

IRIS 2021-9:1/17

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Following the switch-over to digital television in July 2011, Cyprus audiovisual media service providers continue to operate with temporary digital licences. The latest extension of licences will be until the end of June 2022. Law 74(I)/2021, amending the basic Law on Radio and Television Organisations (L. 7(I)/1998), authorises the Radio Television Authority to extend the validity of television licences for all operating service providers for one more year. The law was published in the Official Gazette on 28 April 2021. Amendments to the basic Law 7(I)/1998 that would reflect the conditions of the new environment and make it possible to issue permanent licences have been pending for many years. Various amendments were made to the law but none of them have addressed the issues that would enable the issuing of permanent (normal) digital licences. Thus, temporary licences have now been extended until 30 June 2022.

By virtue of the same amending law, temporary licences granted to Legal Entities of Public Law (LEPL) have also been extended for one year, even in cases where they do not fulfil all of the requirements set out by law. This is applicable to *Αρχή Τηλεπικοινωνιών Κύπρου* (Cyprus Telecommunications Authority — CYTA), a semi-governmental organisation that also operates IPTV. Its capital share and structure as a LEPL deviates from the model set in the basic law, which requires, amongst other things, capital share dispersion and a ceiling of 25% per shareholder. CYTA has so far benefited from a special provision voted on in 2011, allowing it to continue to operate in the digital environment.

The amending law also authorises the Radio Television Authority to issue temporary licences to new applicants, also valid until the aforementioned date - the of end June 2022.

This extension of temporary licenses for one year may be the last one and permanent digital licences may be issued before June 2022. This would be possible after a draft law — amending the basic law on Radio and Television Organisations in order to transpose into national law Directive 2018/1808/EU — is adopted by the House of Representatives. In addition to the transposition of the Directive, the draft law provides that the Radio Television Authority is vested with the power to decide on the procedure for the granting of digital licences and the required application documents.

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The same draft law provides for a derogation from the obligations of applicants to have a specific shareholding structure, as well as other features in the case of LEPLs, such as the case of CYTA mentioned above.

Finally, while the validity of analogue licences (before the switch-over to digital) used to extend to ten years, the draft law provides for a reduced period of five years, for digital licences.

Νόμος 74(I)2021 που τροποποιεί τους περί Ραδιοφωνικών και Τηλεοπτικών Σταθμών Νόμους του 1998 έως αρ.2 του 2020

http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2021_1_074.pdf

Law 74(I)2021 Amending the Law on Radio and Television Organisations 7(I)1998

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