[FR] Foreign Channels on the French Cable Network

IRIS 1998-1:1/28

Bertrand Delcros
Radio France

A judgement handed down on 10 September 1996 by the Court of Justice of the European Communities (European Commission vs. Kingdom of Belgium - see IRIS 1996-10: 5-6) condemned the principle of prior agreement between the National Media Authority (CSA) and broadcasters from EU Member States before they can be distribued on cable networks (in the USA referred to as "cable systems"). It is now up to France to draw the consequences of this decision. Article 34-1 of the law of 30 September 1986 states that the cable operator, the body that makes up the programme package, has to obtain authorisation from the Audiovisual Supervisory Board (Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel - CSA) and that each channel seeking to be distributed has to sign a convention with the CSA setting out the production and broadcasting quota of French and European-produced programmes. The aforementioned judgement of 10 September 1996 means the convention system has to be discarded. The CSA, even before the change in the law, scheduled for Spring 1998, decided to set up a temporary scheme whereby a simple declaration has to be made when foreign channels are being carried on the French cable network.

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