[LV] Extension of the media restrictions on Russian channels

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On 6 June 2022, the National Electronic Mass Media Council of Latvia (NEPLP) blocked 80 Russian TV channels in Latvia, thereby prohibiting all Russian TV channels from broadcasting in Latvia. The Parliament of Latvia has further expanded the powers of NEPLP by amending the Electronic Mass Media Law several times as a result of which the number of banned broadcasting channels continues to increase. Since the beginning of April 2022, three sets of amendments to the Electronic Mass Media Law have been introduced. The first set of amendments, which entered into force on 21 April 2022, grants the NEPLP the right to restrict access to on-demand services by blocking them in Latvia in the following situations:

NEPLP has not been notified of the on-demand electronic mass media services and the service provider has not ceased their provision upon NEPLP’s request; it is not possible to identify the service provider; and where blocked on-demand electronic mass media service providers use alternative domain names for identical already blocked on-demand electronic mass media services.
The second set of amendments, which entered into force on 31 May 2022, aim to ensure that audio, audiovisual programmes and audiovisual services are not offered on-demand in Latvia by a country which is threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty or independence of another country. NEPLP now has the right to restrict the distribution of such programmes or services in Latvia. The latest amendments entered into force on 16 June 2022 to ensure that programmes not included in the list of audio and audiovisual programmes to be retransmitted in Latvia are not distributed to the public. This ensures that programmes for which NEPLP has made the decision to restrict distribution in Latvia are not available to the public. Subsequently, the number of restricted broadcasting programmes has increased. On 31 March 2022, NEPLP had restricted access to two websites, but by 7 April 2022 access had been restricted to 16 websites that disseminated content that threatened Latvia’s national security; namely, disinformation about the war in Ukraine that glorifies the Russian regime and falsely accuses Ukraine of various war crimes, as well as blames Western countries for provocations. Recently, on 6 June 2022, NEPLP, in accordance with the second set of amendments to the Electronic Mass Media Law, blocked the remaining 80 Russian TV channels in Latvia. Some of NEPLP's decisions have been challenged before the court. In the case regarding Gazprom Media related TV channels, the administrative court of Latvia decided to apply

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interim measures by allowing broadcasting. However, with the above mentioned amendments to the law, these TV channels have been re-blocked. Meanwhile, NEPLP has issued an international broadcasting permit to the Russian independent media TV Rain (Dozdj).

Elektroniskais plašsaziņas līdzekļu likums

https://likumi.lv/ta/id/214039-elektronisko-plassazinas-lidzeklu-likums

Electronic Mass Media Law

NEPLP preses relīze NEPLP saistībā ar apdraudējumu valsts drošībai ierobežo piekļuvi 16 tīmekļvietnēm Latvijas teritorijā

https://www.neplp.lv/lv/jaunums/neplp-saistiba-ar-apdraudejumu-valsts-drosibai-ierobezo-piekluvi-16-timeklvietnem-latvijas-teritorija

NEPLP restricts access to 16 websites in the territory of Latvia due to threats to national security. NEPLP press release

NEPLP preses relīze: NEPLP aizliedz 80 Krievijā reģistrētu TV programmu izplatīšanu Latvijā

https://www.neplp.lv/lv/jaunums/neplp-aizliedz-80-krievija-registretu-tv-programmu-izplatisanu-latvija

NEPLP prohibits the distribution of 80 Russian TV programmes in Latvia. NEPLP press release

NEPLP preses relīze: NEPLP izsniedz apraides atļauju televīzijas programmai TV Rain

https://www.neplp.lv/lv/jaunums/neplp-izsniedz-apraides-atlauju-televizijas-programmai-tv-rain

NEPLP issues a broadcasting permit for the TV programme "TV Rain". NEPLP press release

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