[LV] New amendments to the Latvian Electronic Mass Media Law enter into force.

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On 24 September 2022 amendments to the Electronic Mass Media Law entered into force. The purpose of the amendments is to strengthen the safety and protection of the Latvian information space and to promote greater transparency on the identity of the real beneficiaries of electronic mass media to prevent the possibility of hidden influence.

Specifically, the new amendments prohibit issuing broadcasting permits for television programmes that are excluded from the list of audio and audiovisual programmes to be rebroadcasted in Latvia on the basis that the country of jurisdiction of the programme threatens the territorial integrity, sovereignty or national independence of another country, or based on a decision made by the National Electronic Mass Media Council (NEPLP) in the past five years to prohibit rebroadcasting of a programme.The amendments also establish new requirements regarding the language for television programme distribution service providers. From now on, when distributing a programme with a language track that is not in an official language of one of the European countries or countries of the European Economic Area, providers are obliged to primarily provide this programme with a language track in the national language. This would apply to a situation where a TV distribution service provider, such as a cable operator, applies a voice-over on a programme in a non-EU language (most often in practice – Russian). Now it is mandatory to ensure that the primary language track is in Latvian.

The biggest changes introduced relate to the disclosure of the identity of the real beneficiaries. These changes are introduced mainly due to the existing geopolitical situation in which it is essential to promote the transparency of the media environment and take action to prevent any covert influence on the media environment. NEPLP now has the right to request information about the beneficial owners from electronic mass mediums that have received rebroadcasting permits and broadcasting permits, the owner (holder) of the programme, and on-demand service providers. NEPLP also has the right to exclude a programme from the list of audio and audiovisual programmes to be rebroadcast in Latvia if the information about beneficiaries is not submitted, or if it is false. According to the transition rules, the electronic media shall update the information on the real beneficiaries and provide this information to the NEPLP by 31 October 2022. Additionally, the amendments forbid the provision of an on-demand service, the

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content of which completely or partially duplicates the content of electronic media programmes in respect of which the NEPLP has adopted a decision on the prohibition of distribution in Latvia.

Grozījumi Elektronisko plašsaziņas līdzekļu likumā

https://likumi.lv/ta/id/335815-grozijumi-elektronisko-plassazinas-lidzeklu-likuma

Amendments to the Electronic Mass Media Law

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