

MEASURES CONCERNING ACCESS OF VISUALLY AND HEARING-IMPAIRED PEOPLE TO TELEVISION PROGRAMMES

Latvia

1. Subtitling for deaf and hearing-impaired viewers

1.1. Are there legal provisions on the use of subtitling?

The only provision included in Radio and Television Law of Latvia (adopted August 24, 1995) regarding subtitling is as follows: Article 19 Paragraph 1 provides that the parts of broadcasts in the language other than the general broadcasting language shall be provided with translation (by dubbing, recording or subtitling)

1.2. Are there obligations on Public Service Broadcasters concerning subtitling? If so, what are these? (types of programmes, percentage of programming, etc.)

No

1.3. Are there obligations on commercial broadcasters concerning subtitling? If so, what are these? (types of programmes, percentage of programming, etc.)

No

1.4. Are there other arrangements concerning the use of subtitling? If so, what are these?

No

1.5. Do broadcasters, who are not under any obligation to provide subtitling, provide subtitling on a voluntary basis?

Yes.

The major commercial broadcasters (AS Latvijas Neatkarīgā Televīzija, SIA TV 3 Latvia) provide subtitling for almost all movies broadcasted in their programmes. However, these subtitles are in Russian, which is a widely spoken language in Latvia (native language for circa 30% inhabitants). If the language of the broadcast is other than Latvian then Latvian subtitles are provided as well to ensure translation (when the translation is not provided by recording or dubbing).

Also, one of the major commercial broadcasters (AS Latvijas Neatkarīgā Televīzija), as well as the public service broadcaster (Latvijas Televīzija) have recently started to provide written headlines during their news broadcasts. These headlines outline the major daily events and run parallel to the text spoken by news' presenters.

The public service broadcaster offers a broadcast "Together" with disabled people as its target auditory. This broadcast contains subtitles.

1.6. Are speech recognition systems used or being developed?

No

1.7. Are provisions on subtitling envisaged in particular in the context of the digital switchover?

Not yet (the details of digital switchover, especially, the contents to be provided, have not been adopted in political level up to this moment)

2. Audio Description

2.1. Are there legal provisions on the use of audio description?

No

2.2. Are there obligations on Public Service Broadcasters concerning audio description? If so, what are these? (types of programmes, percentage of programming...)

No

2.3. Are there obligations on commercial broadcasters concerning audio description? If so, what are these? (types of programmes, percentage of programming, etc.)

No

2.4. Are there other arrangements concerning the use of audio description? If so, what are these?

No

2.5. Do broadcasters, who are not under any obligation to provide audio description, provide audio description on a voluntary basis?

No

2.6. Are provisions on audio description envisaged in particular in the context of the digital switchover?

No

3. Sign Language

3.1. Are there legal provisions on translation into sign language?

Yes. Radio and Television Law Article 54 Paragraph 4 envisages that within the national remit the public need for broadcasts with sign language translation shall be satisfied.

3.2. Are there obligations on Public Service Broadcasters concerning translation into sign language? If so, what are these? (types of programmes, percentage of programming, etc.)

Yes. As the public service broadcaster pursuant to Radio and Television Law is the main fulfiller of national remit, it carries out the translation of certain programmes in sign language. However, this duty of the public service broadcaster is not explicitly stated by law: it is included in the annual national remit, confirmed by the Radio and Television Council. There are no specific types of programmes or certain percentage requested: the broadcaster may decide how to carry out this task. Currently the sign language translation is provided for one daily news broadcast.

3.3. Are there obligations on commercial broadcasters concerning translation into sign language? If so, what are these? (types of programmes, percentage of programming, etc.)

No

3.4. Are there other arrangements concerning translation into sign language? If so, what are these?

No

3.5. Do broadcasters, who are not under any obligation to provide sign language, provide translation into sign language on a voluntary basis?

No

3.5. Are provisions on sign language envisaged in particular in the context of the digital switchover?

No