

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

The Czech Republic

1. Subtitling for deaf and hearing-impaired viewers

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

There are two legal bases dealing with this issue:

Law No. 231/2001 Coll. on radio and television broadcasting operation and on changes of other acts in Art. 32 paragraph 2 states: Any licensed nation-wide television broadcaster shall provide hidden or open captions for the deaf in at least 15% of the programmes, and any nation-wide statutory television broadcaster (ie. public service broadcaster) shall provide hidden or open captions for the deaf in at least 70% of the programmes, unless otherwise provided in a special Act.

Law No. 483/1991 Coll. on Czech Television states in Art. 3 paragraph 1 point a): Czech television fulfils its public service in television broadcasting by providing at least 70 % of programmes hidden or open captions for the hearing impaired people or by providing sign language.

Commentary: The percentage of subtitles for public service broadcaster was imposed by the Parliament without proper consultation with the Ministry of Culture and Czech television in 2001. This percentage was never achieved by the broadcaster. Czech television according to its possibilities and strategy disagrees with this amount because it is hardly tangible and actually not useful due to the nature of some programmes (music and sport programmes).

Organisations gathering the handicapped people have several times stressed it is important to increase the amount of subtitles for the commercial broadcasters and rephrase the provision so that the percentage of subtitles would be counted from the overall broadcasting time not from the number of programmes.

1.2. Are there obligations on Public Service Broadcasters concerning subtitling?

If so, what are these? (types of programmes, percentage of programming, etc.)

General broadcasting law as well as the law concerning Czech television (as public service broadcaster) do not impose specific obligation concerning the type of programmes to be subtitled. Czech television is obliged to fulfil its public service in television broadcasting by providing at least 70 % of programmes hidden or open captions for the hearing impaired people or by providing sign language.

1.3. Are there obligations on commercial broadcasters concerning subtitling?

If so, what are these? (types of programmes, percentage of programming, etc.)

Law No. 231/2001 Coll. on radio and television broadcasting operation in Art. 32 paragraph 2 states: Any licensed nation-wide television broadcaster shall provide hidden or open captions for the deaf in at least 15% of the programmes. No other obligation or specification is stated.

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?

No

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?

No

2. Audio Description

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

Law No. 231/2001 Coll. on radio and television broadcasting operation and on changes of other acts in Art. 32 paragraph2 states: Any licensed nation-wide television broadcaster shall provide hidden or open captions for the deaf in at least 15% of the programmes, and any nation-wide statutory television broadcaster (ie. public service broadcaster) shall provide hidden or open captions for the deaf in at least 70% of the programmes, unless otherwise provided in a special Act.

Law No. 483/1991 Coll. on Czech Television states in Art. 3 paragraph1 point a): Czech television fulfils its public service in television broadcasting by providing at least 70 % of programmes hidden or open captions for the hearing impaired people or by providing sign language.

2.2 Are there obligations on Public Service Broadcasters concerning audio description?

If so, what are these? (types of programmes, percentage of programming, etc.)

Law No. 483/1991 Coll. on Czech Television states in Art. 3 paragraph1 point a): Czech television fulfils its public service in television broadcasting by providing at least 70 % of programmes hidden or open captions for the hearing impaired people or by providing sign language. There are no other specific requirements concerning audio description.

2.3. Are there obligations on commercial broadcasters concerning audio description?

If so, what are these? (types of programmes, percentage of programming, etc.)

Law No. 231/2001 Coll. on radio and television broadcasting operation and on changes of other acts in Art. 32 paragraph2 states: Any licensed nation-wide television broadcaster shall provide hidden or open captions for the deaf in at least 15% of the programmes

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?

Law No. 483/1991 Coll. on Czech Television states in Art. 3 paragraph 1 point a): Czech television fulfils its public service in television broadcasting by providing at least 70 % of programmes hidden or open captions for the hearing impaired people or by providing sign language.

Commentary: This means there is no specific amount of time or programmes to be translated into the sign language but it is one of the way how to fulfil the general obligation for public service broadcaster to provide 70% of programmes hidden or open captions for the hearing impaired people or by providing sign language. In fact the amount is between 1 – 2%.

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.)

See above

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.)

There is no obligation for commercial broadcaster

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

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

Not specifically but the possibility to provide sign language translation in a larger scale was unofficially mentioned by the Czech television as one of the advantages of digital tv.