

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

Sweden

1. Subtitling for deaf and hearing-impaired viewers

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

No, there is no legislation concerning the use of subtitles. However, broadcasting licenses issued by the Government may be subject to conditions stipulating that the broadcasts shall be designed in such a manner that makes them accessible to persons with functional impairments.

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

The broadcasting license for The Swedish public service TV broadcaster (SVT) stipulates that at least 50 percent of the broadcasting time for programmes of Swedish origin being shown for the first time should be subtitled at the end of the license period (the current license period is Jan 2002 to Dec 2005).

All foreign programmes and movies are subtitled in Swedish, only children's programmes are dubbed to Swedish. The subtitling of Swedish programmes is generally optional through text-TV.

In 2003 SVT broadcasted a total of 9828 hours of programmes (with national coverage) , of these 5331 hours were subtitled.

The broadcasting license for Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company (UR) stipulates that UR shall consider the need for function-impaired and that the amount of subtitled programmes shall increase substantially during the license period.

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

The broadcasting license for TV4 stipulates that big entertainment programmes and Swedish TV drama shall be made available for function-impaired at least in the same extent as in 1996. TV4 subtitled 110 hours of programme time in 1996, in 2003, 312 hours of Swedish spoken programme time was subtitled.

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

The broadcasting license for TV4 also stipulates that the activities concerning the function-impaired shall be increased during the license period in so far as new technical improvements makes this possible without increased costs.

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

All foreign programmes and movies are traditionally subtitled.

1.6. Are speech recognition systems used or being developed?

Yes, SVT has worked during the last years in order to develop speech recognition system.

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

No, the issue has not been raised in direct connection to the digital switchover, but digital technique is being used by the companies to develop new and cheaper systems for subtitling and spoken subtitles. Digitalisation will thus bring new services and extended services to the disabled.

2. Audio Description

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

No, there is no legislation concerning the use of audio description. However, broadcasting licenses issued by the Government may be subject to conditions stipulating that the broadcasts shall be designed in such a manner that makes them accessible to persons with functional impairments.

The broadcasting licenses for SVT, UR and Swedish Radio (SR) also stipulates that the three corporations may divide the responsibility concerning function-impaired. The main responsibility for vision-impaired has been left to SR.

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

The broadcasting license for SVT stipulates that the ambition should be to develop a system for reading out subtitles (for vision-impaired people) during the license period. This system has recently been launched.

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

There are no obligations on commercial broadcasters concerning audio description.

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

There are no other arrangements.

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

Not to our knowledge.

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

No, but the system for reading out subtitles which has been developed by SVT depends on digital transmission and reception.

3. Sign Language

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

No, there is no legislation concerning the use of sign language. However, broadcasting licenses issued by the Government may be subject to conditions stipulating that the broadcasts shall be designed in such a manner that makes them accessible to persons with functional impairments.

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.)

The broadcasting license for SVT stipulates that the focus of programmes intended for deaf primarily should be news, information and culture programmes. These programmes should be translated into sign language. Programmes for children and youth should be prioritised.

In 2003 the total amount of programme time with sign language was 78 hours. The license also stipulates that the amount of sign language should not decrease.

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 are no obligations on commercial broadcasters concerning sign language.

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

There is a special TV-productions facility used for producing programmes directed to deaf that is incorporated in SVT. These facilities shall according to the license be used in the same extent as in the previous years.

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

Not to our knowledge.

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

No.