

Key elements of European regulations and policies

Presentation by Deirdre Kevin, Commsol

Accessibility of audiovisual media services Workshop

JUFREX 2

January 29th 2020,

Skopje

Presentation outline

The purpose of this session is to look at the overall trends in Europe regarding approaches to and best practice in the policies for promoting accessibility of audiovisual media services.

It will include the following:

- ❖ **Key definitions and tools**
- ❖ **Approaches** to regulation
- ❖ Treatment of **different types of TV channels**
- ❖ What is happening in the **on-demand** world
- ❖ Delivery and **distribution** of content

Key definitions of tools for accessibility for people with hearing disabilities

- **Access services:** term used to refer to accessibility services
- **Sign language interpretation** is the use of a sign language to convey the information contained in the programme audio (speech and other important sounds) to viewers who are deaf, or for whom sign language is their first language
- **Subtitles (also called captions)** provide a textual representation of dialogue within the same language or translated into another language.
- **Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SDH)** differ from regular subtitles in so far that they provide important non-speech information as well as speaker identification, which may be useful when the viewer cannot otherwise see who is saying what.
- **Closed captions** or closed SDH are not visible until activated by the viewer, usually via the remote control or menu option.
- **Open captions** or open SDH, on the other hand, are 'burned-into' or 'hard-coded' onto the video and are visible to all users. They cannot be personalised.

Examples

- **Sign language interpretation**
- <https://www.rtv slo.si/dostopno/znakovni-jezik#174667524>
- **Subtitling and sign language: what are they?**
- <https://www.swisstxt.ch/en/cases/access-services/?autoplay=1>

Key definitions of tools for accessibility for people with seeing disabilities

- **Access services:** term used to refer to accessibility services
- **Audio description:** communicates important visual content with spoken information inserted as a narrative between the dialogue and other programme sounds.
- **Spoken subtitles** are the reading aloud of interlingual subtitles in a spoken voice. These are accessibility measures especially useful for persons with visual or reading impairments and for blind/deaf blind persons, particularly in countries which do not dub programmes into the national language. Spoken subtitles are also known as audio subtitles.

Examples

- **Audio description: what is it?**
- <https://abilitynet.org.uk/news-blogs/what-next-audio-description-tv-and-advertising-techshare-pro-2018>

Article 7 AVMS

1. Member States shall **ensure, without undue delay**, that services provided by media service providers under their jurisdiction are made **continuously and progressively more accessible** to persons with disabilities through proportionate measures.

Fig 1 Progressive quota systems, fixed requirements and general obligations

*Article 7 (1). Member States shall **ensure, without undue delay**, that services provided by media service providers under their jurisdiction are made **continuously and progressively more accessible** to persons with disabilities through proportionate measures.*

Rules outline **progressive quotas/targets** that need to be met by media service providers

Ireland
Belgium (CSA)
Netherlands
Poland
United Kingdom

Fixed requirements in terms of % of programming or hours of programming – rules updated periodically

France
Greece
Sweden
Switzerland
Spain
Portugal

General obligation: media service providers should make accessible services available – no specific % or hours

Denmark
Germany
Estonia
Lithuania
North Macedonia
Slovenia
Romania *

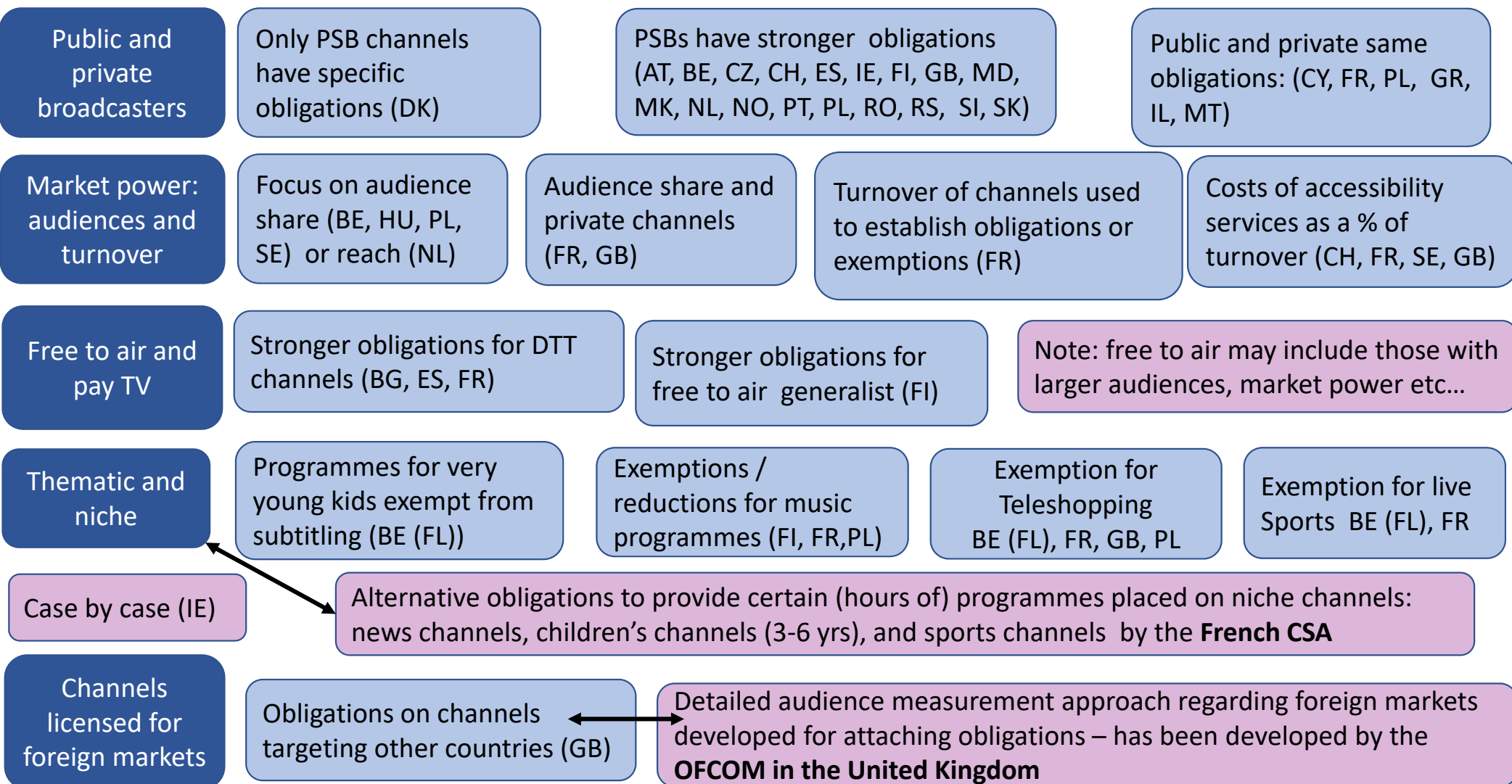
**In Romania, there a requirement regarding 30 mins of news with signing per day*

Example of gradual targets, from Ofcom UK in 2015

Targets applicable to non-public service channels

Anniversary of relevant date	Subtitling	Audio Description	Signing
First	10%	2%	1%
Second	10%	4%	1%
Third	35%	6%	2%
Fourth	60%	8%	2%
Fifth	60%	10%	3%
Sixth	70%	10%	3%
Seventh	70%	10%	4%
Eighth	70%	10%	4%
Ninth	70%	10%	4%
Tenth	80%	10%	5%

Fig 2 Obligations on different types of broadcasters



Example: subtitle quotas for different channels: BAI

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
PUBLIC	RTÉ 1	87% (95% Peak Time)	88% (95% Peak Time)	90% (96% Peak Time)	91% (96% Peak Time)	92% (96% Peak Time)	
	RTÉ 2	73% (85% Peak Time)	74% (86% Peak Time)	76% (87% Peak Time)	77% (87% Peak Time)	78% (88% Peak Time)	
	RTÉjr	48%	49%	51%	52%	53%	
	RTÉ News Now	24%	25%	27%	29%	30%	
PRIVATE	Virgin Media 1	51% (51% Peak Time)	53% (52% Peak Time)	54% (54% Peak Time)	55% (55% Peak Time)	56% (57% Peak Time)	
	Other Virgin Media Services	50% of combined output	52% of combined output	53% of combined output	54% of combined output	55% of combined output	
PUBLIC	TG4	57% (60% Peak Time)	57% (60% Peak Time)	58% (60% Peak Time)	58% (60% Peak Time)	59% (60% Peak Time)	
PRIVATE	Eir Sport 1	12%	12%	13%	13%	14%	
	+ 1 & HD Channels	Any subtitling carried on the main television service shall be made available through +1 and HD Channels					
PARLIAMENT	Oireachtas TV	16%	16%	17%	17%	18%	
COMMUNITY	CCTV	11%	11%	11%	12%	13%	
	DCTV	11%	11%	11%	12%	13%	

Fig 3 Obligations in the on-demand world – an emerging area of regulation

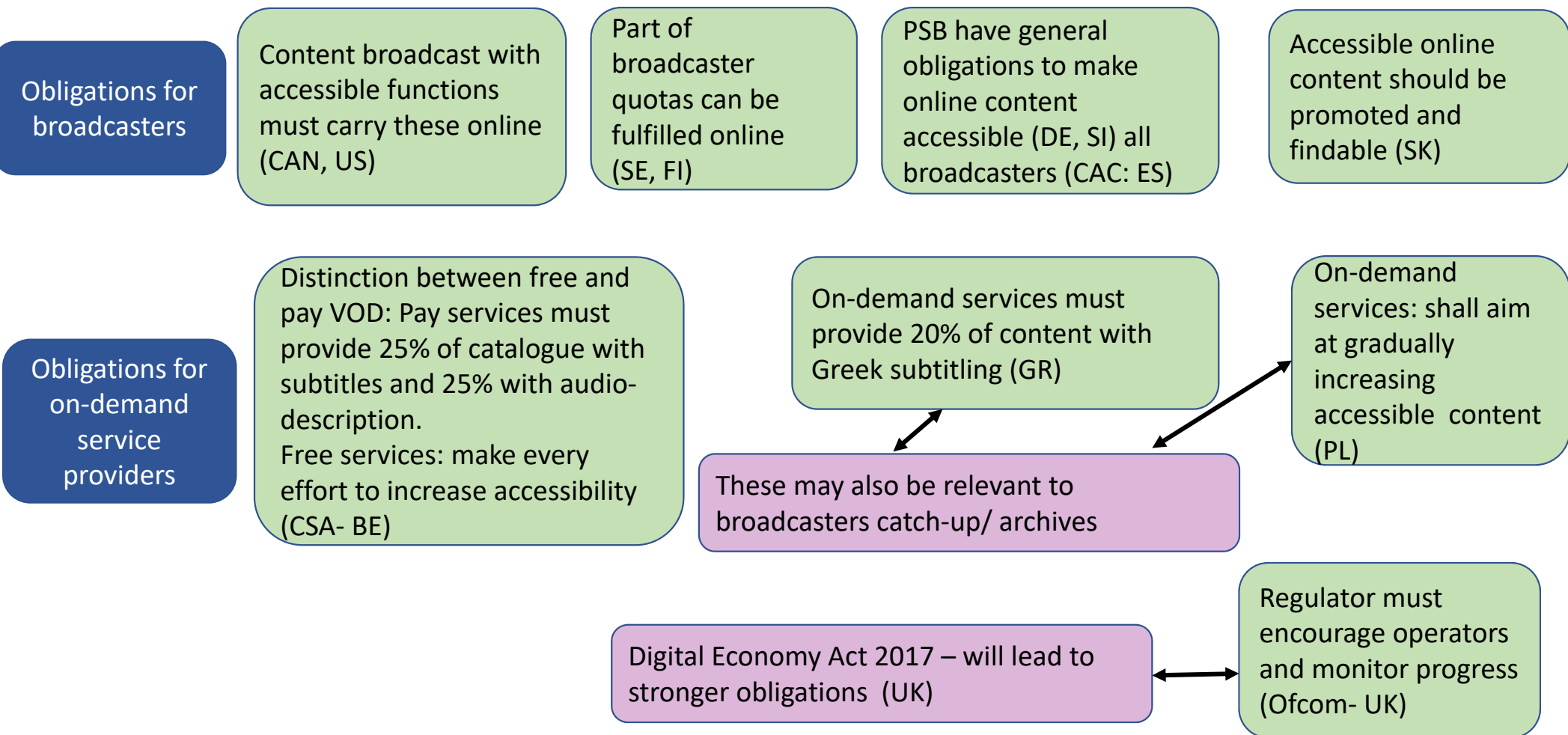


Fig 4 Delivery and distribution of content, and quality

Technical access to
audiovisual media
services

Must- carry rules

Quality of
accessibility tools

Findability

Agreements
and initiatives

European Accessibility Act



distribution
companies must
deliver
accessibility
services: Belgium
(CSA), Denmark,
Malta, France,
Greece, Portugal,
Switzerland and
the UK.

Agreements
and charters on
quality of
accessibility
tools (CSA – BE,
IE, FR GB)
Research in this
area (PT).

“findability”
requirement to
inform viewers
of accessibility
functions.
(Belgian French-
speaking
Community,
Ireland, Slovakia,
Portugal, the
UK)

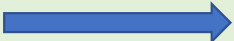
Project to
develop a DTT
receiver with
vocalised (text to
speech) in the
French language.
(France)

DTT set-top
boxes must be
able to receive,
decode and
display the
various access
services (Ireland)

access services
of audiovisual
media services
are fully
transmitted with
adequate quality
for accurate
display, and
synchronised
with sound and
video

in practice the broadcasters
are adding this information
to programme descriptions
and TV programme guides

Conclusions

- AVMS Directive  increased obligations
- In a broader context of stronger protection of rights for people with disabilities
- In many countries, a progressive approach has long been established – in some cases this has already resulted in high levels of accessible content
- Distinctions are made between types of services, and/or types of content – often this is a question of cost and burden
- Obligations are being introduced for on-demand services
- There are also obligations for distribution companies to carry through these services