

## World News

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# PUBCASTERS PEEVED

## New EC regulations called too restrictive

By IAN MUNDELL BRUSSELS

European pubcasters are unhappy with a rule that means new or significantly modified services must be evaluated in advance against criteria set in Brussels.

The rule is part of revised regulations on state-subsidized public

service broadcasting finalized Thursday by the European Commission. Each year European pubcasters pull in €22 billion (\$31 billion) in public coin.

The evaluation is intended to ensure that new services comply with the broadcaster's overall public service mission, and any impact on the

market is balanced by public gain.

European Broadcasting Union topper Jean-Paul Philippot argued that it would have been better to leave the choice of mechanism to national governments, which can respond to local social and cultural needs.

"There is a real risk that the unique, dynamic function of public service media will be endangered by unduly restrictive regulation," he said, calling for the rule to be implemented flexibly.

The regulations, updating a 2001 law, are intended to allow governments to subsidize cutting-edge pubcasting without treading on the toes of commercial operators.

"Public broadcasters will be able to take advantage of the development of digital technology and Internet-based services to offer high-quality services on all platforms, without unduly distorting competition at the expense of other media operators," said competition commissioner Neelie Kroes.

The Assn. of Commercial Television in Europe is happy with shift.

## 'Gossip' flows to German streaming site

By ED MEZA BERLIN

"Gossip Girl" has become the first U.S. TV series to stream online at ProSieben.tv, German web ProSieben's online video portal, where it is available to viewers on an ad-supported basis.

Complete episodes of the show, which airs on the CW in the U.S., will be uploaded each week directly after its free TV broadcast on Saturday and remain available for a week.

The series airs a week in advance of its regular TV broadcast on Maxdome, the ProSiebenSat.1 group's online video-on-demand platform.

The distribution agreement with Warner Bros. Intl. Television Distribution is a breakthrough for ProSiebenSat.1, which has long offered locally produced series and formats from its three main channels online but has until now been unable to stream its popular U.S. content, which includes "Supernatural," "The Tudors," "Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles," "Navy CIS" and "Nip/Tuck."

ProSieben wants to expand its online offering and is in negotiations to secure further rights for shows.



"Gossip Girl"

## Gonzo to delist, downsize

By MARK SCHILLING TOKYO

Japanese toon house Gonzo will delist from the Mothers section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange on July 30.

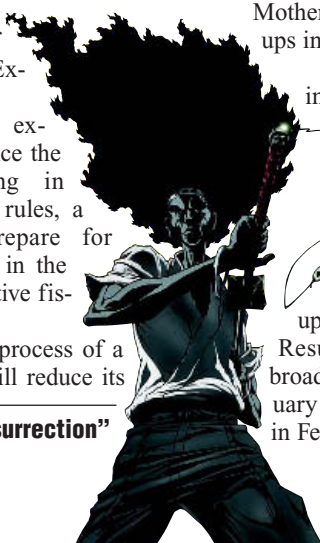
Its debts have exceeded its assets since the fiscal year ending in March; under TSE rules, a company must prepare for delisting if it stays in the red for two consecutive fiscal years.

Gonzo is in the process of a restructuring that will reduce its

creative staff from 130 to 30 within five years and stem the losses.

The toon house listed on the Mothers exchange for startups in November 2004.

Gonzo's many credits include "Afro Samurai," a toon series voiced and co-produced by Samuel L. Jackson that aired on Spike TV in 2007. A follow-up pic, "Afro Samurai: Resurrection," was broadcast on Spike in January and released on DVD in February.



"Afro Samurai: Resurrection"

## Banijay's swimming in Teutonic Brainpool

By JOHN HOPEWELL MADRID

Pan-European TV shingle Banijay Entertainment has bought a 50% stake in Germany's Brainpool TV. Price was not disclosed.

Cologne-based Brainpool will continue to be run by Stefan Raab and fellow shareholders Jorg Grabosch, Ralf Gunther and Andreas Scheurmann. The buy gives Banijay a major presence in Teuton TV and a partnership with one of its most charismatic stars — Raab.

A talent-driven concern, Brainpool groups 16 companies ranging



Courbit



Raab

from light entertainment and fiction production houses to interactive and facility companies and joint production ventures for performers such as Anke Engelke and Bastian Pastewka.

Its hits include Raab's latenight yakkler "TV Total" and the prime-time "Schlag den Raab" (Beat the Host), both on ProSieben, where Raab takes on members of the public or celebs at bizarre challenges.

Banijay will twin Brainpool's Teuton talent with Banijay formats, either created inhouse, bought by its acquisitions department or sourced from its international partners and subsids. The relationship is a two-way street, Banijay CEO Guillaume de Verges stressed.

(Ed Meza in Berlin contributed to this report.)

## SPAIN

### Xpand, Vercine bow pic distrib

Digital 3-D system company Xpand and Barcelona-based Vercine will launch a film distrib in Spain this September.

The still-unnamed shingle aims to handle four or five 3-D films a year, starting with "Garfield's Pet Force 3D" and "Battle for Terra 3D." — Emiliano de Pablos



## SOUTH KOREA

### Film topper felled

Korean Film Council topper Kang Han-sup ankle Thursday after receiving poor marks in an evaluation conducted by the Ministry of Strategy and Finance.

The Ministry, which supervises the body, gave the lowest grade to the council during an evaluation of 92 governmental orgs issued June 19, and recommended dismissing Kang. Org will be under the control of vice chairman Shim Sang-min for now. — Han Sunhee

## GERMANY

### Off the dance floor

Wim Wenders has halted production of his 3-D dance pic featuring Pina Bausch following the German choreographer's death on June 30, five days after being diagnosed with cancer.

Wenders announced the ambitious production a couple of months ago, saying, "The two-dimensional cinema screen is just not capable of capturing Pina Bausch's work, either emotionally or aesthetically." — Ed Meza