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Complaint filed with COMCO: Swisscom fights for its ice hockey fans

UPC holds the broadcast rights to the league games from the coming 2017-18 Swiss ice hockey season right up to the playoffs. However, UPC has only offered the signal to Switzerland's cable network operators. This would mean that Swisscom – with 1.48 million households subscribing to its Swisscom TV service (as at end-2016) – would in future be the only operator excluded by the rights-holder from broadcasting games live. This would represent a dramatic change to the present situation, in which the current rights-holder, Teleclub, ensures that games can be shown on all networks, be it IPTV, the major cable networks or small, local broadcasters. Swisscom is fighting to prevent its customers being deprived of Swiss Ice Hockey League games in the future. It has therefore filed a complaint with the Competition Commission (COMCO).

Swisscom demands fair play: all sports broadcasts must be available to all households

Last year, Teleclub, which owns the broadcast rights to football matches, offered all Swiss TV platform operators an opportunity to broadcast all its sports events. However, the cable network operators have declined this offer so far. Swisscom started extensive broadcasting of ice hockey games from scratch ten years ago, thus firmly establishing ice hockey among the sports shown on Swiss television.

Swisscom TV customers and/or Teleclub subscribers undoubtedly benefit from the extensive programme of ice hockey broadcasts, including games in the US National Hockey League (NHL), the Champions Hockey League as well as, from the coming season, the Swiss Ice Hockey Cup. In May, the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championships will also be broadcast live on Teleclub and Swisscom TV for the very first time.

Background information:

Teleclub holds the rights to a total of 30 different competitions, including a sizeable ice hockey portfolio featuring the NHL and the Swiss Ice Hockey Cup. Teleclub has been on air since the spring of



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1982 and has broadcast Swiss sports events live since 2006. From the outset, the majority of these broadcasts were available to view not only on Swisscom TV but also on all cable networks. To enable Teleclub's sports content to be received even on small cable networks, Teleclub has for decades operated a sophisticated and closely knit distribution system. After all, many small networks – of which there are still well over a hundred in Switzerland – have difficulty offering their own pay TV.

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