

audiovisual ministers agree to eu tv ad rules

European Union nations have agreed to keep television advertising to a maximum of 12 minutes per hour and to keep product placement out of children's programmes and news bulletins.

Audiovisual ministers met in Brussels yesterday (Monday), where they agreed that the decision over whether to allow product placement in broadcasts should lie with individual governments, although it would remain banned from news, children's programmes and documentaries.

The agreement, which will be voted upon by the European Parliament next month, is widely regarded as vital for preventing the growing commercialisation in Europe's television industry.

The EU's audiovisual and media commissioner, Viviane Reding, said that the rules would ensure that the EU's television market did not become like that of America.

"We don't want US-style television on European TV screens, with permanent advertising where advertising drives content," she insisted. "We want content to drive advertising."

However, media and technology firms have expressed concerns that the rules could lead to less investment in emerging media formats, such as video broadcasts via internet and mobile phone.

