

[HU] Case Brought by Journalists Against Journalists on Violation of Personal Reputation

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On 11 October 1998 the Court of Appeal in Budapest (Metropolitan Court) delivered a decision in a dispute between journalists about the truthfulness of the TV reporting by two of them which had been publicly called into question by two of their journalist colleagues (joined by two other defendants).

One of the most popular Hungarian weekly TV programs on domestic politics is called "Week" and is broadcast in national public service TV1. On 20 June 1993 a report was broadcast by the plaintiffs on the 23 October 1992's national celebration of the anniversary of Hungary's fight for independence against the Soviet troops which had invaded Hungary on 23 October 1956. For example, the report showed that extremist radical right wing groups attempted to prevent the Hungarian President of the State to deliver his public speech at the Hungarian Parliament.

According to the defendants, the report on the appearance and demonstration of extremist radical right wing groups at the Hungarian Parliament had neither been made on the real site of the events nor at the actual time of the gathering.

The plaintiffs claimed that these allegations which have been made by their colleagues working also at TV1 who were eventually known for their right wing political affiliations - were violating the plaintiffs' reputation. In considering all evidences, the Court of Appeal decided in favour of the plaintiffs by ruling that the allegations of the defendants were not proved to be true and therefore harmful to the plaintiffs' reputations. The court also held, that the plaintiffs have the right to announce the court's decision related to the report in question in the same television program.

This was amongst the first Hungarian court cases decided at the final instance by independent courts, in which journalists were sued by other journalists in connection with professional ethical issues.

Metropolitan Court (Court of Appeal in Budapest) 47.Pf 25 598/1994/47, decision of 11 October 1998.

