[SI] Redefining Position of Public Service Broadcaster

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In 1998, the Constitutional Court invalidated the decree which had been adopted on the basis of the Law on the public service broadcaster RTV Slovenia and served as the legal basis for the collection of licence fee. While RTV Slovenia remains entitled to collect the fee, the Court instructed Parliament to amend the law in such a way that RTV Slovenia will also have a legal basis for gathering information on citizens who are liable for payment. The Court's request must be satisfied by October this year. Members of Parliament belonging to the ruling coalition have submitted a proposal for amendment of the existing law.

The proposal introduces a new concept of fee collection, under which all households with electricity connections would be considered as television set owners. Those who do not own a set would have to submit a legal binding declaration in order to be exempt from payment. RTV Slovenia would be authorised to gather information on subscribers from electricity distributors and cable operators. It is expected that the income from licence fees would rise by up to 10% if the amendments were enforced. At present, only a little above 60% of the fee is collected and the financial losses of the public service broadcaster have been increasing for several years.

Although the government (the Ministry of Culture) is preparing some bigger changes of the Law on RTV Slovenia, it is expected to back up the Parliamentarians' proposal and at a later stage to submit other changes, concerning programme, transparency and advertising issues.

Parliamentarians from the Opposition submitted another proposal to amend the Law on RTV Slovenia, which introduces a third public service television channel which would be entirely dedicated to live transmissions of parliamentary sessions and other parliamentary working bodies. It is to be financed entirely from the state budget.

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