[BG] Amendments of the Penal Code in Force

IRIS 2000-4:1/29

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The Law on Amendments of the Penal Code (see IRIS 2000-3: 14), which had been vetoed by the President, was changed and re-voted by Parliament on 8 March 2000 and promulgated and published in the State Gazette on 17 March. Three days after its promulgation the Law entered into force.

The amendments of the Penal Code's provisions had been the subject of heated debate in the media and in Parliament because of their impact on the journalistic profession. The President vetoed the initial Draft Law on Amendments because of the inclusion of high fines that appeared excessive and disproportionate to the Bulgarian standard of living.

In accordance with the recommendations laid out in the Motives to the Presidential veto, the fines now specified by the Law are considerably decreased and more differentiated for the different sub-cases of "offence" and "calumny".

For the general case of "offence" the fine is fixed at between 1 and 3,000 new Bulgarian lev (BGL). For the special case of "an offence made in public, spread through the media and caused by, or addressed to, a person in its official capacity" the penalty varies between 5 and 15,000 BGL. The range of fines provided for the general case of "calumny" is from 3 to 7,000 BGL while for the qualified cases of "calumny committed in public, through media or caused by, or addressed to, a person in their official capacity" it is from 5 to 15,000 BGL.

Although the fines provided in the initial Draft Law were considerably decreased, the new Law was again strongly disputed in Parliament. At the same session of the Parliament further amendments of the Penal Code were suggested (but not adopted) for some violations concerning the forced spreading of false statements in the media and obstructing the publishing of true statements.

The Law on Amendments of the Penal Codes, promulgated and published in the State Gazette on 17 March 2000.

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