[GR] New Legislation on the National Radio and Television Council and the Other Authorities in the Audiovisual Sector

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The Greek Parliament recently adopted new legislation (Act no. 2863/2000) concerning the Ethniko Symvoulio Radiotileorassis (National Radio and Television CouncilESR) and the other authorities in the audiovisual sector, i.e., the Minister for the Press and the Mass Media and the self-regulatory bodies set up by the Act. The Act reinforces the role of the ESR, which was established as an independent authority in 1989, and extends its powers to grant licences and impose penalties. The ESR is responsible for issuing, renewing and revoking licences in respect of private radio and television channels broadcasting without encryption and suppliers of encrypted radio and/or television services. It has general supervisory powers as regards programme quality and transparency in the audiovisual sector, and imposes penalties on broadcasters who infringe the legislation in force. Its decisions, as regards both granting licences and imposing penalties, are no longer subject to the supervision of their compliance with legislation exercised until now by the Minister for the Press and the Mass Media. The Minister retains his general responsibilities in proposing the necessary regulatory and legislative measures, monitoring developments in the audiovisual sector at Community and international level, etc.

The ESR now comprises seven members; its chairman and vice-chairman are appointed by the College of Presidents of the Greek Parliament on proposals from the President of the Parliament. The decision of the College requires a qualified majority of four-fifths. The term of office of members of the ESR is four years. The Act stipulates which functions are incompatible with membership of the ESR in order to ensure that it remains independent of radio and television companies and general political influence. Failure to meet the requirements of the new Act, and in particular as regards incompatibility, will be dealt with by a disciplinary board set up for the purpose.

The ESR is in four parts, reflecting its areas of responsibility - granting licences, ensuring respect for transparency, programme quality and ethics, and technical support and administrative services. The Act includes a series of provisions concerning the administrative and scientific staff recruited by the ESR, and provides that the ESR is to draw up its own internal regulations to determine the more detailed rules for its functioning.

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Act 2863/2000 on the National Radio and Television Council and other authorities in the audiovisual sector, Official Journal 262 of 29 November 2000

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