[CZ] Revised Czech Television Act

IRIS 2001-3:1/7

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On 23 January 2001, the Czech Parliament passed an amendment to the Czech Television Act. The amendment was drawn up after the Parliamentary Speaker declared a legislative state of emergency.

At the end of last year, the appointment of a new Director General of Czech public service broadcasting led to mass strikes. The appointment was seen as an attempt to gain political control over public service television (see IRIS 2001-1: 7).

Generally speaking, however, the amendments to the Act are not particularly far-reaching, although the role of public service television is newly and more precisely defined.

The Director General will continue to be elected by the members of the Czech Television Council, which in future will have fifteen members instead of nine. As before, these members will be appointed by Parliament. However, candidates for Council membership will from now on be nominated by organisations and associations representing cultural, regional, social, religious, scientific and environmental interest groups, as well as trade unions, employers and national minorities. One-third of the members will step down on a rotational basis every two years. Council meetings and the minutes of those meetings will, in principle, be open to the public.

Another new provision is the establishment of a supervisory board responsible for monitoring how the funding and assets of Czech television are used. The board will be appointed by the Council, to which it will report any breaches it finds and recommend the necessary sanctions.

The Director General will submit to Parliament a code of conduct for Czech television, setting out basic principles for the activities of public service television. If the code is breached, the Director General may be dismissed.

The new Act makes a number of interim provisions. For example, the existing Council was dissolved on the day on which the Act came into force. The Parliament then had sixty days in which to appoint a new Council. It was also empowered to dismiss the Director General during that period and choose an acting Director to fulfil that role until the Council elected its own new Director General.

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Under the new Television Act, public service broadcasters are also, for the first time, made subject to the Information Act and the Act on Public Services.

The Television Act entered into force on 25 January 2001.

Zákon, c. 39/2001 Sb., kter´ ym se mení zákon c. 483/1991 Sb., o Ceské televizi, a o zmene nekter´ ych dalsích zákon °u

Act 39/2001 of 23 January 2001 amending Act 483/1991 on Czech Television

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