[LT] New Requirements for Publishing of Political Advertising

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On 10 June 2008 the *LR Seimas* (Parliament) adopted amendments to the Law on Financing and Control of Financing of Political Parties and Political Campaigns. The amendments came into force on 21 June 2008.

The amendments are mainly concerned with the regulation of the publishing of political advertising in radio and television programmes.

The amended law states that broadcasters under Lithuanian jurisdiction shall refrain from broadcasting video and audio advertising clips and films about political parties in their radio and television programmes. Furthermore, the provisions of the law forbid free (unpaid) publishing of political advertising in the broadcast programmes. This is in complete contrast to the former rule, which allowed free political advertising as well as clips and films about political parties.

It is worthwhile noting that forms other than video and audio advertising clips and films, e.g. debates and discussions forums on political issues and parties have not been forbidden.

The amended law provides for another new provision, according to which political parties can themselves order political advertising in radio and television programmes, except during the campaigning period. When the Central Electoral Committee announces the beginning of the campaigning period this possibility expires. The Central Electoral Committee decides on political advertising in the programmes of broadcasters with a national scope as well as determines the amount of finances for the advertising for each particular political party. The former law did not prevent the political parties from ordering political advertising during the campaigning period in radio and television programmes.

The new regulation of political advertising raised a lot of discussion, because the opponents of the amendments argued, that the amount of surreptitious advertising on political issues would increase on the one hand, and the right to disseminate important information for the electors would be restricted on the other.

It should be noted, that the above-mentioned amendments do not apply in relation to the Internet.

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Law on Financing and Control of Financing of Political Parties and Political Campaigns

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