[SK] Broadcaster Fined for Paraphrasing Interior Minister

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On 7 October 2004, Radio Viva, formerly known as Radio Twist, broadcast a report from the official press conference held by the then Interior Minister Vladimír Palko. The news-presenter paraphrased a part of Palko's report on a police investigation where he announced that the police had accused a Slovak judge of a crime (fraud). Furthermore it was announced that the Slovak judge was prosecuted unapprehended for this crime. However, the judge was not identified by his full name. The sentence of Palko's report was abbreviated by the news-presenter and it was read without mentioning that it was „according to Palko's words“.

In October 2008 the Bratislava Regional Court ordered the Slovak broadcaster Radio Viva to apologize and to pay EUR 30,000 libel damages to the Slovak judge, Mr. Jozef Soročin, in association with the report on the fraud charges brought against him.

In the interests of precision it should be noted that the Bratislava Regional Court found the statement made by the news-presenter during the objective report to be an “incorrect and truth-distorting infringement on the civic honor and dignity of Mr. Jozef Soročin”.

The only domestic option now available to Radio Viva is an appeal to the Constitutional Court. If it fails in this, Radio Viva has indicated its intention to take the case to the European Court of Human Rights.

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