[GR] Greek Public Service Broadcaster in Crisis

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The Greek public service broadcaster, Ελληνική Ραδιοφωνία Τηλεόραση A. E. (National Television and Radio, Inc. - ERT), has been facing a serious crisis over the past few months. The PSB's three television stations (ET1, NET and ET3) and the five radio stations of national coverage, as well as a number of regional radio stations which also transmit via ERT's systems, have not gathered the popularity enjoyed by corresponding European organisations, while criticism of its inordinately big number of employees has been intensifying, particularly during recent months, when ways of saving money in the public sector have been sought.

A new law adopted in September 2010 aims at regulating certain questions concerning the administration of the company. Most particularly, the division of the positions of the President of the Administrative Council and of the Managing Director are foreseen, so as to ensure administrative flexibility, while the responsibilities of the Board of Directors are also due to be clarified. Nevertheless, how to best fill the position of the Managing Director of ERT, Inc. remains an important open issue, as at the end of July, six months after his initial appointment, the director appointed by the new government, handed in his resignation. A public tender for the position, a process that usually lasts more than two months, has already been published.

During the most recent administrative period the findings of the Body of Inspectors of Public Administration, a service for the internal inspection of the administration, were submitted to the Minister of Culture and Tourism, reporting serious occurrences of inefficient administration, lack of transparency, illegal assignments and improvident spending of public money during the last three years. The findings have been forwarded to the Public Attorney of the Court of Appeals for the investigation of possible criminal liability, as indicated by the findings and the conclusions drawn therein. During the same administrative period, it was announced that the Public Attorney of the Court of First Instance began criminal proceedings against seven of ERT's members of staff for the perpetration of two felonies and four misdemeanours in the agreement of contracts harmful to the State.

These problems will soon be placed in the hands of Mr. Telemaxos Xitiris, deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism, to whom, as was announced during the recent Cabinet reshuffle, all audiovisual matters will be assigned.

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