[HU] Parliament Amends Media Acts

IRIS 2011-5:1/41

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On 7 March 2011 the Hungarian Parliament adopted some amendments of great significance to the new media acts (Act CIV of 2010 on the Freedom of the Press and the Fundamental Rules on media content as well as Act CLXXXV of 2010 on Media Services and Mass Media). The amendments were put forward by the government following an agreement between the European Commission and the Hungarian Government reached on 16 February 2011 (see IRIS 2011-3/24).

According to the amendments the obligation to provide balanced coverage applies henceforth only to linear media services (i.e., television and radio broadcasting) and not any more to on-demand media services. Furthermore, providing authentic, rapid and accurate information on public affairs at local, national and EU level as well as on any event bearing relevance to the citizens of the Republic of Hungary and the members of the Hungarian nation is a task for the entirety of the media system and not only for the media content providers as it was foreseen in the previous version of the Act.

Concerning the registration of on-demand and ancillary media services and the products of the printed press as well the amendment clarifies that registration is not a condition for taking up such a new service or activity. However, media service providers and publishers shall be notified to the National Media and Communications Authority for registration within 60 days following the commencement of such a service or activity.

According to the new rules, media service providers established in European Economic Area member states will no longer be fined for breaching the provisions of the Hungarian media law. However, linear media service producers established outside the territory of the Republic of Hungary with a view to avoiding the applicability of more stringent Hungarian rules may face a fine as well as other legal consequences.

Furthermore, the Parliament has rescinded the prohibition of direct or implied offence against persons, nations, communities, national, ethnic, linguistic and other minorities or any majority as well as any church or religious groups. The Hungarian media law prohibits in the future only discrimination and incitement to hatred against them.

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The amendments entered into force on 6 April 2011 and they are applicable in the ongoing procedures before the Media Council or the Office of the National Media and Communications Authority.

2011. évi XIX. törvény / A sajtószabadságról és a médiatartalmak alapvetõ szabályairól szóló 2010. évi CIV. törvény és a médiaszolgáltatásokról és a tömegkommunikációról szóló 2010. évi CLXXXV. törvény módosításáról

http://www.kozlonyok.hu/nkonline/MKPDF/hiteles/MK11030.pdf

Act XIX of 2011 on amendment of Act CIV on the freedom of the press and the fundamental rules on media content as well as of Act CLXXXV of 2010 on media services and mass media

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