[LT] New Regulation for the Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania

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On 1 January 2013 the Amendment of Article 47 of the Act on Provision of Information to the Public came into force. It was adopted by the Seimas (Parliament) on 14 June 2012 and provides for the reformation of the *Lietuvos radijo ir televizijos komisija* (Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania - LRTK). The new provisions change the principles of the formation of the LRTK, define the requirements for the members, the rules for their designation, and the conditions for expiry of the member's powers before the designated term. They also determine the LRTK's financing.

The number of members has been decreased from 13 to 11 and the Commission's formation procedure has changed. Two members shall be appointed by the President of the Republic, one member shall in each case be appointed by the Seimas Committees on Education, Science and Culture and on the Development of the Information Society and another member by the opposition factions. Three more members are to be appointed by the Lithuanian Association of Artists and one member by each of the following: the Lithuanian Bishops' Conference, the Lithuanian Journalists' Union and the Lithuanian Journalists' Society.

New requirements to be met by LRTK members are set by the amended Act as well. Only a Lithuanian citizen of good repute with university education and no less than five years of experience in the fields of audiovisual policy, production or dissemination of public information and professional or academic experience in the public information, educational, cultural, scientific or human rights fields may be appointed as a member of the LRTK. A person, who less than a year ago was a member of the management of a company or organisation falling under LRTK's regulation and/or might have an interest in such company or organisation, shall not be appointed as a member of LRTK. Heads of the appointing institutions or organisations and the employees of the LRTK administration may not be appointed as Commission members either.

The members shall be appointed for a four year period and shall serve for not more than two consecutive terms. At least 60 days before the term of office of the appointed member expires, the LRTK has to request the appointing institutions to designate a new member.

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According to the amended Act, the Seimas designates and recalls the chairman and the vice-chairman, who can serve in this position for no longer than two terms in a row. Both are elected on the basis of a consensual nomination of the Seimas Committee on Education, Science and Culture and the Committee on the Development of the Informational Society. Until the chairman of the Commission is elected, such function shall be performed by the eldest member of the LRTK. Formerly, the chairman was elected by the LRTK itself and the term was unlimited.

The amended Act provides for possibility mechanism to recall a LRTK member; in such circumstances the LRTK requires the appointing institution to recall the member by not less than two thirds of the members consensually stating that the member committed a violation of LRTK's Regulation.

The amendments also change the financing rules of the LRTK. Firstly, the amount of the fee paid by the broadcasters, re-broadcasters and VOD providers, with the exception of the public broadcaster Lietuvos nacionalinis radijas ir televizija (LRT), is reduced from 0.8 to 0.6 per cent of their income received from commercial communications, advertising, subscription fees and other activities related to the respective broadcasting and re-broadcasting.

According to the recent amendments, LRTK shall prepare a report on its activities and the collection of the financial accounts together with the conclusion of an independent auditor and an audit report to the Seimas each year. The reports and accounts shall be assessed by the Audit Committee, the Committee of Development of the Informational Society and the Committee of Education, Science and Culture. In the case that two of the Committees do not approve the reports, they have to be considered at the Seimas plenary session. If the report is not approved in the plenum, the whole Commission can be formed anew.

Visuomenės informavimo įstatymo 47 straipsnio pakeitimo įstatymas, 14/06/2012

http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=427599&p_query=&p_tr2=2

Act on the Amendment of the Act on Provision of Information to the Public of 14 June 2012

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