[RO] Financial Basis of Public Television Service Stabilised

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On 11 March 2013 the Romanian Senate (Upper Chamber of the Parliament) approved the *Legea pentru aprobarea Ordonanţei de urgenţă a Guvernului nr. 33/2012 privind unele măsuri pentru asigurarea furnizării serviciului public de televiziune* (Law on the approval of the Government's Emergency Decree no. 33/2012 on safeguarding the provision of public service television). The Draft Law had been approved on 8 October 2012 by the Chamber of Deputies (Lower Chamber) and promulgated by Romania's President on 28 March 2013. The Law (Law no. 68/2013) was published in the Official Journal of Romania no. 183, of 2 April 2013, Part I.

The Emergency Decree was adopted by the Romanian Government on 27 June 2012 due to the severe financial problems of the Televiziunea Română (TVR), the Romanian public television. TVR's debts amounted to more than EUR 134 million.

The Government saw the necessity for the Decree as regards the democratic value of public service television and the general public interest to receive information. According to the Emergency Decree, within 45 days of its approval, the Board of Administration of the TVR had to issue an economic recovery plan containing measures restructuring the corporation including the employees. These measures then had to be taken in order to pay the fiscal debts within six months or to defer the debts.

After another six months, the Board had to present a report to the Parliament unveiling the results of the economic recovery plan. Regarding this obligation, the members of the Board would have been personally liable in cases of omission.

The Law no. 68/2013 for the approval of the Emergency Decree no. 33/2012 added new provisions to the Emergency Decree. Most importantly, the six-month term to pay the fiscal debts was extended to seven years, since the fiscal debts could be deferred. Within ten days of the end of this period, the Board of Administration will have to issue a report on the results of the recovery program to the Committee on Culture and to the Committee on Budget and Finance of the Romanian Parliament. The non-observance of this ten-day term may lead to the dismissal of the President of the Board in case of personal fault. The rejection of the report by the Parliament will lead to the dismissal of the whole Board.

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The President of the TVR's Board of Administration stated on 3 April 2013 that the TVR now was able to continue the implementation of the reform program and that, due to the deferral, the public television can start to pay off the large debts.

In the course of the recovery plan, a new organisational chart of TVR came into force on 1 February 2013: about 700 employees (out of approximately 3,150) were made redundant by 1 March 2013. Two TVR channels (TVR Cultural and TVR Info) were shut down and their productions were included in other TVR channels.

Meanwhile, the Romanian Senate rejected a Draft Law on the modification of Art. 40 of the Law no. 41/1994 on the organisation and functioning of the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Corporation and of the Romanian Television Corporation on 12 February 2013. The Draft Law envisaged abolishing the broadcasting licence fee. The draft had been tacitly approved on 15 February 2011 by the Chamber of Deputies, but the Senate's rejection was final. The TVR would have lost its main source of revenues; in 2011 the licence fee accounted for a 55.97% share of the revenues.

Ordonanţa de urgenţă a Guvernului nr. 33/2012 privind unele măsuri pentru asigurarea furnizării serviciului public de televiziune

http://www.cdep.ro/proiecte/2012/200/80/7/oug369.pdf

Government Emergency Decree no. 33/2012 on safeguarding the provision of the public television service

Proiect de lege pentru aprobarea Ordonanţei de urgenţă a Guvernului nr. 33/2012 privind unele măsuri pentru asigurarea furnizării serviciului public de televiziune

http://www.senat.ro/Legis/PDF/2012/12L402FP.pdf

Draft Law on the approval of the Government's Emergency Decree no. 33/2012 on safeguarding the provision of the public television service

Propunere legislativă pentru modificarea art. 40 din Legea nr. 41/1994 privind organizarea şi funcţionarea Societăţii Române de Radiodifuziune şi Societăţii Române de Televiziune

http://www.cdep.ro/proiecte/2010/600/70/8/cd678_10.pdf

Draft Law on the modification of. Art. 40 of the Law no. 41/1994 on the organisation and functioning of the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Corporation and of the Romanian Television Corporation

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