# [GE] Amendments to Broadcasting Law

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*Andrei Richter*
*Comenius University (Bratislava)*

On 12 July 2013, the Georgian Parliament overturned the presidential veto on the bill providing amendments to the law on broadcasting, which envisages measures for more financial transparency of broadcasters, reforming the rule of composition of public TV's board of trustees and transforming Adjara TV's status into that of a public broadcaster.

The presidential objections concerning the bill, originally passed by the Parliament on 31 May 2013, mainly concerned a provision that envisages giving the legislature the right to disband the Georgian Public Broadcaster's (GPB) board of trustees in the case of GBP's budget problems or failure to fulfill its content-related programming priorities.

Also, while according to existing rules, the President selects three candidates for each of the 15 seats in the board and then the Parliament approves one of those three candidates for each seat, the adopted amendments envisage reducing the number of board members to nine, who will take their seats for a six-year term. The amendments also exclude the President from the process of selecting board members. Three members, according to the new rules, shall be nominated by the parliamentary majority faction, three by the parliamentary minority factions and independent deputies. Two members of the board are to be selected by the Public Defender (ombudsman) through competition; one other will be nominated by the local legislative body of Adjara Autonomous Republic.

The adopted bill shall reform Adjara TV, making it into a public broadcaster and legally and financially affiliate it with the Georgian Public Broadcaster. The bill offers to allocate funds for Adjara TV's operations from GPB's budget; the amount of funding should be at least 15% of GPB's annual budget.

According to the bill GPB's annual budget should be not less than 0.14%, instead of the current 0.12%, of the country's GDP for the previous year.

The bill envisages measures for making broadcasters' finances transparent by obligating broadcast license holders to fill in and make public their property declarations.

The bill also obligates cable providers to transmit all Georgian television channels with news programs. Since June 2012 this rule was enforced but only for 60 days

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before the national elections. Although it was no longer legally binding, after the October 2012 elections the rule de facto remained in place.

The bill was reviewed by an expert of the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

***Analysis of proposed amendments to the Law of Georgia "On Broadcasting"***

http://www.osce.org/fom/100314

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*Act No 833 On Amendments to the Law of Georgia on Broadcasting*

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