[SK] Legislative Increase of the Assigned Collected Revenues of Regulatory Authority

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On 12 December 2013, the Slovak Parliament adopted the Act no. 473/2013 Coll. on the budget of the Slovak Republic for 2014. The Act among other things cut the budget of the Council of Broadcasting and Retransmission (hereinafter "Council") by 18%. At the same time the Act increased the prescribed revenues of the Council (these form income of the state budget) to EUR 340,000 which represents a 100% increase over the revenues prescribed in year 2013. The revenues of the Council are primarily formed of the fines imposed to the subject of regulation (audiovisual media service providers, cable and satellite operators etc.).

In mid-February, representatives of the International Press Institute (hereinafter „IPI") sent a formal letter to the chairman of the Council and along with representatives of the Association of commercial TV and radio broadcasters met in person with the chairman of the Council. Both representatives stated that it remains unclear why the Ministry of Finance expects revenues of the Council to increase so dramatically. They both fear that these dramatic increases of the prescribed revenues could force the Council to issue greater numbers of fines in increasing amounts in order to prevent additional budget cuts in future. IPI is particularly concerned that the likely targets of "new" fines could be broadcasters that share unwelcome news coverage or political opinions.

Both at the meeting, as well as in his formal answer, the chairman of the Council stated that any decrease of the expenses in this year's or future years' budgets of the Council will have to be realised within the activities of the Council and that increased sanctioning activity of the Council would not change anything. The chairman informed IPI and the broadcasters that during the adoption of the Council's budget at the Slovak parliament in December 2013, the Council informed the members of the parliament about the improbability of reaching the prescribed revenues. Furthermore, the Council notified the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Culture as well as Slovak media about this matter.

Zakon z 12. decembra 2013 o štátnom rozpočte na rok 2014

http://www.zbierka.sk/sk/predpisy/473-2013-z-z.p-35527.pdf

Act no. 473/2013 Coll. on the budget for 2014

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