

[AL] Parliament issues call for applications for positions as members of the regulator

IRIS 2014-6:1/5

Ilda Londo
Albanian Media Institute

On 6 May 2014, the Parliamentary Commission on Education and Public Information Means approved the proposal to start procedures for filling four vacancies out of the seven members positions in the Autoriteti i Mediave Audiovizive (Audiovisual Media Authority- AMA). This proposal came from the ruling majority and was voted for only by its members. The members of parliament of the opposition put forth an alternative proposal, which consisted in seeking advice from the Council of Legislation first, since legal expertise was necessary to determine whether there were three or four vacancies in the regulator. When both proposals were voted, the proposal of the ruling majority passed with greater number of votes and the opposition refused to continue the meeting and discuss the further procedures. The decision was also discussed in the plenary session on 8 May 2014, where the parliament voted to publish the call for three vacancies and postpone the decision on the fourth vacancy until the next plenary session, allowing for the voting to be placed on the agenda.

This decision of the commission was preceded by several months of discussions and disagreements between the members of parliament on the actual vacancies in the AMA. The disagreement focused on the validity of the mandate of the current chairwoman of AMA. The ruling majority maintained that the mandate of the current chairwoman of AMA was invalid. Their claim was based on a memo of the Service of Monitoring of Independent Institutions, which concluded that her mandate had expired in September 2012 and her continuation in this post in the last 18 months has been illegal. The reasoning was that the Chairwoman's mandate had expired in September 2012, when the mandate of the member she replaced in the first place in the regulator expired. Then the memo claims she should have been voted on again as a member according to the law. On the other hand, the opposition members of parliament and the chairwoman of AMA argued that the same body, the Service of Monitoring of Independent Institutions, had a different opinion on this matter in July 2013, stating that there were three vacancies in AMA, not four.

In this context, the opposition regarded the decision as a political one, aiming to control independent institutions. The members of parliament of the opposition declared they will reject this decision and they can also challenge it at the Constitutional Court, if necessary. The ruling majority has defended its decision, claiming that the regulator was unable to make decisions for more than a year,

since it lacked the necessary quorum due to expiration of the mandates of four of its seven members.

Për shpalljen e 3 vendeve vakante për anëtarë të AMA-s

http://www.parlament.al/web/Per_shpalljen_e_3_vendeve_vakante_per_anetare_te_AMA_s_14615_1.php

Call for missing members of AMA

Report on plenary session of the Albanian Parliament, Parliament convenes in plenary session, 8 May 2014

http://www.parlament.al/web/Parliament_convenes_in_plenary_session_17071_2.php

