

[AL] The Steering Council of the public broadcaster fails to elect the new General Director after three rounds of voting

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The Steering Council of the public broadcaster Albanian Radio and Television (Radio Televizioni Shqiptar - RTSH) failed to elect the new General Director of RTSH after three rounds of voting in June 2015. The voting process shortlisted two final candidates, but none of them managed to get the majority required to become the General Director. According to Article 99, paragraph 6 of the Law 97/2013 on Audiovisual Media in the Republic of Albania, the Steering Council needs at least seven votes out of eleven to appoint the new General Director.

The voting rounds took place after the application process, in which the record number of 20 applications were submitted for the position of the General Director of RTSH, including from the former General Director, current RTSH staff, and other well-known personalities and journalists. 16 candidates who met the legal criteria were shortlisted. The Steering Council organised a public, televised hearing of their presentations on 20 June 2015, which marked the first public presentation in the history of the election procedure of RTSH directors.

After the voting process shortlisted two candidates, and neither of these two shortlisted candidates received a majority of votes, the Steering Council decided to do another shortlisting process from the total number of applicants, in order to expand the pool of candidates. This led to a deadlock in the voting process. In its following meeting on 6 August 2015, the Steering Council failed to agree on a process of election that would lead to the new General Director. Currently the process has been postponed until September 2015.

Given the deadlock of the process, there have been proposals to change the current regulation on the election of the General Director. The Deputy Chair of the Parliamentary Commission on Media and Public Information and member of the ruling majority of Parliament has made a public statement on his social media page suggesting that the law could be amended to elect the director through a simple majority of votes. According to the Deputy, this would solve the deadlock that threatens to leave the public broadcaster without a General Director.

For more than a year the public broadcaster has been managed by the deputy director. First the delay in electing members of the Steering Council, and now the delay in electing the General Director, have led to the failure of RTSH to adopt its

Statute, elect new management structures, and adopt other necessary documents and guidelines.

