

[AL] Parliament amends formula for election of public service broadcaster's General Director

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On 14 April 2016, in a plenary session, the parliament voted to change the rules for the election of the General Director of the public broadcaster Radio Televizioni Shqiptar. The Act no. 22/2016 "On some additions and amendments to the Act no. 97/2013 'On Media in the Republic of Albania'" stipulates that the General Director of the public broadcaster needs 3/5 of the votes of the Steering Council members to be elected. If this does not happen in the first three rounds, he/she can be elected in the next two rounds through a simple majority. In case all five rounds fail, the Steering Council will be dissolved. Before these amendments to the Act, Article 102 of Act no. 97/2013 stated that the Steering Council can approve and dismiss the General Director with 2/3 of the votes, and did not set a limit on the number of voting rounds.

The ruling majority proposed this amendment in February 2016, as a result of the deadlock in the voting process for a new general director of the public broadcaster. The competition for electing the new general director was opened in June 2015, but after two candidates were shortlisted, neither of them received the required 2/3 of the votes of the Steering Council. The proposed amendment from the ruling majority Members of Parliament was opposed by the opposition Members of Parliament. The opposition Members of Parliament viewed the amendment as an attempt of the ruling majority to appoint a person that was close to the ruling majority as director, in breach of the agreement of consensus between opposition and ruling majority.

The proposed amendment was passed in the Parliamentary Commission on Media on 29 February 2016, with only the votes of the ruling majority, and voted in in a plenary session on 10 March 2016. The Law was returned again to the parliament for review by the President of the Republic, who considered the law might breach several constitutional provisions. However, after reviewing the President's arguments, the Parliamentary Commission again approved the Act on 6 April 2016, with only the ruling majority votes. In the plenary session on 14 April 2016 the amendment of the law was approved with 74 votes in favour and 37 against.

Liqj nr. 22/2016, datë 10.3.2016, Për disa shtesa dhe ndryshime në ligjin nr. 97/2013, "Për mediat audiovizive në Republikën e Shqipërisë"

http://www.qbz.gov.al/botime/fletore_zyrtare/2016/PDF-2016/67-2016.pdf

Act no.22/2016 “On some additions and amendments to Act no. 97/2013 ‘On Audiovisual Media in the Republic of Albania’”

