[RO] President promulgates law on cutting the public radio and TV fee

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On 6 January 2017, the Romanian President promulgated Act no. 1/2017 that slashes 102 non-fiscal taxes and duties, including the public radio and TV fees, the consular and citizenship fees and the Environment Fee. The law was published in the Official Journal of Romania no. 15 of 6 January 2017. According to an amendment adopted in the Budgets Committee of the Chamber of Deputies, the law enters into force on 1 February 2017, at the beginning of the first month following its publication in the Official Journal of Romania.

On 28 December 2016, the Chamber of Deputies (the lower Chamber of the Romanian Parliament) rejected the President's request to re-examine the law. Previously, on 27 December 2016, the upper Chamber, the Senate, had also rejected the re-examination of the law. The Social Democrat Party (PSD, the main party in the ruling coalition) had promised to cut the 102 non-fiscal taxes and duties in the electoral campaign for the recent parliamentary elections held on 11 December 2016, which the PSD won by a very large margin.

The Romanian President had previously challenged the law before the Constitutional Court, which ruled on 16 December 2016 that the law was compliant with the Romanian Constitution. Then, on 23 December 2016, the President asked the Parliament to re-examine the law. With regard to cutting the licence fee for public radio and television broadcasters, he considered that the decision of whether or not to cut the licence fee for Radio Romania and the Romanian Television should only be taken after a large debate. The President also considered that cutting the licence fee could create very important functional problems for the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and could diminish the quality of the journalistic contents, combined with the risk of reduced editorial independence, due to the public radio and TV stations' financial envelope being potentially subject to political control.

According to the specialists, the republished Act 41/1994, which regulates the activity of the Romanian public radio and television broadcasters, will have to be further modified to clarify the legal status of the two PBS, which will be completely financed from the State budget, but which are, in the existing form of the Act 41/1994, public services of national interest, editorially independent, under Parliamentary control.

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Legea privind eliminarea unor taxe şi tarife, precum şi pentru modificarea şi completarea unor acte normative - forma pentru promulgare

http://www.cdep.ro/pls/proiecte/docs/2016/pr473_16.pdf;1.pdf

Act on cutting some taxes and tariffs, as well as on the modification and completion of more laws - form sent for promulgation

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