[BG] Amendments to the Radio and Television Act

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Two amendments were made to the Radio and Television Act (RTA) in December 2017. One of the changes concerns the reduction of the administrative burden for applicants who want to provide media services. The amendments envisage for the Council for Electronic Media (CEM) to officially request (ex officio) electronically from the National Revenue Agency, the Customs Agency and the municipalities information for the respective candidate on the presence or absence of obligations to the public authorities, and they come into effect as of 1 January 2018 (published on 17 November 2017 in the Official Gazette, issue 92).

At the same time, another amendment to the RTA came into force on 1 January 2018 (published on 12 December 2017 in the Official Gazette, issue 99). In section 2, paragraph 4 of the Transitional and Final Provisions of the RTA, it is envisaged that from 1 January 2019, the state budget subsidy for the Bulgarian National Radio (BNR), the Bulgarian National Television (BNT) and the Council for Electronic Media be entirely replaced by funding from the Radio and Television Fund.

In its original design (in 1998), the law provided that the funding for public service media and the CEM be made entirely by the Radio and Television Fund after 2007 and not by the state budget:

The resources of the Radio and Television Fund shall be disbursed for: the financing of the BNR and the BNT; the financing of the Council for Electronic Media; the financing of projects of national importance involving the implementation and use of new technologies in radio and television broadcasting activities; the financing of significant cultural and educational projects; the financing of projects and activities designed to extend the audience and/or territorial reach of radio and television programme services; the management of the Fund; and the National Electric Company EAD, in connection with the collection of the fees (Article 103, paragraph 1 of the RTA).

According to Article 102, paragraph 1 of the RTA, the resources in the Radio and Television Fund shall be raised from: the monthly fees charged for the reception of radio and television programme services; the initial and annual licence fees or registration fees, as the case may be, as collected by the Council for Electronic Media; the interest on the resources raised in the Fund; donations, legacies and

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bequests; or from other sources as specified in a statute.

A monthly fee shall be charged for the purpose of financing public-service radio and television broadcasting activities on the basis of each registered electric meter (Article 93, paragraph 1 of the RTA). The fee herein shall be paid together with the sums due for electricity consumption according to the applicable procedure through the pay desks of the power supply utilities of the National Electric Company EAD (Article 95 of the RTA). However, the National Electric Company EAD was privatised, and over the years no fund-raising mechanism has been set up. That is why the legal text about the financing of the BNR, BNT and CEM annually postpones funding from the Radio and Television Fund after 2007. It is expected that the reform for the financing of the public service media in Bulgaria will be carried out with the changes in the RTA after the transposition of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive in the national legislation.

ЗАКОН ЗА РАДИОТО И ТЕЛЕВИЗИЯТА

https://www.lex.bg/bg/laws/ldoc/2134447616

Radio and Television Act (consolidated version)

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