[LT] Broadcaster ‘Init’ punished

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The Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania (RTCL) has imposed a fine of EUR 150 000 on the broadcaster ‘Init’, which provides cable and IPTV services in Lithuania, for infringing the Law on the Provision of Information to the Public (PIP) and for failing to comply with previous decisions.

After finding TV channel ‘RTR Planeta’ responsible for repeatedly inciting war and national hatred, the RTCL had prohibited the retransmission of the RTR channel by traditional TV and online providers until 23 February 2019. On 1 March 2018, an investigation had shown that ‘Init’ had breached this ban.

According to the law, when imposing the penalty, the seriousness, duration and consequences of non-compliance with the ban should be assessed in terms of the impact of such an infringement on human rights and freedoms, and on the interests of society and the state. Under Lithuanian law, content that incites war and hatred must not be published (Article 19(1) and (3) of the PIP). The Constitutional Court has declared the rule constitutional, since the fundamental rights of freedom of expression and information cannot be used to justify anti-democratic opinions as a means of spreading false information and hatred. According to the RTCL’s decision, the distribution of ‘RTR Planeta’ was dangerous to human rights and freedoms, as well as to the interests of society and the state.

The PIP states that the RTCL is responsible for supervising compliance with the ban on redistributing prohibited content. For non-compliance with its decisions, the RTCL is authorised under Article 341 of the PIP to impose a fine of up to 3% of the broadcaster’s annual revenue in the previous business year. In cases where it is too difficult to calculate gross revenues, the RTCL can impose fines of up to EUR 100 000.

RTCL’s press release, 26 April 2018

https://www.rtk.lt/en/150-000-euro-fine-imposed-on-uab-init/

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