[RO] Three new draft laws to complete the Audiovisual Law

IRIS 2019-2:1/21

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The Chamber of Deputies (lower chamber of the Romanian Parliament) has adopted three draft laws on the modification and completion of the Audiovisual Law no. 504/2002. The Senate (upper chamber) will take the final decisions (see IRIS 2010-1/36, IRIS 2011-4/31, IRIS 2011-7/37, IRIS 2013-3/26, IRIS 2013-6/27, IRIS 2014-1/37, IRIS 2014-2/31, IRIS 2014-7/29, IRIS 2014-9/26, IRIS 2015-10/27, IRIS 2016-2/26, IRIS 2016-10/24, IRIS 2017-1/30, IRIS 2017-7/28, IRIS 2018-6/30, IRIS 2018-8/36, IRIS 2018-10/22).

On 14 November 2018, the Deputies adopted a completion of the Article 26 of the Audiovisual Law due to the fact that Romanian broadcasters frequently address health topics by misunderstanding the obligation of impartiality, with the presentation of unqualified minority opinions as if they had the same weight as the scientific consensus, which is based on evidence and studies validated by the international scientific community. Accuracy of facts is a matter of national importance when addressing a subject with major potential for public health, considering the initiators. The Deputies say the draft Law can prevent irresponsible communication about vaccination and the benefits of vaccination of children, given that in Romania and other countries the vaccination rate has dropped dramatically due to anti-vaccination messages in the media. After the Article 261 a new Article 262 was introduced, which stipulates, inter alia, that for reasons of public health and to ensure access to objective information for the public, within a broadcast/program that addresses health issues broadcasters have the obligation to make a clear distinction between opinions and facts, to encourage the presentation of evidence-based medical arguments, and to include the opinion of a specialist with experience in the subject.

On 21 November 2018, the Deputies adopted a completed version of the Audiovisual Law, which introduces the obligation for broadcasters to display or communicate, on TV and radio programs (news, debates, talk shows) which address domestic violence, the single national non-stop free telephone number (Telverde) for victims of domestic violence, throughout the show. According to official statistics, in Romania someone experiences domestic violence every 30 seconds, but the number of phone calls to the line dedicated to this issue is very low. In this respect, the draft Law introduces a point 13 after the Art.icle 17 (1) d) point 12, about the protection of vulnerable social groups, above all protection of

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victims of domestic violence. After Chapter III4 a new Chapter III5, containing Article 422 - 424 provisions about the protection of victims of domestic violence, obliges the audiovisual broadcasters to provide information to victims on the existence of the dedicated telephone number.

On 19 December 2018, the Lower Chamber of the Parliament adopted a draft Law intended to fight against the dramatic decline in participation in elections since 1990. Radio and TV broadcasters with national coverage and the largest audience will be required to run, 60 days before the elections, educational information campaigns about the importance of exercising the right to vote. In Article 1, a new point 151 is inserted after point 15, as well as in Article 17 (1) d) after point 11, a new point 111 is inserted, about the educational audiovisual communication in the public space on the importance, promotion and encouraging of the exercise of the right to vote. Article 35 (2) is also modified in the sense that the above mentioned announcements on the importance of voting are not included in the hourly limit of advertisment imposed on broadcasters.

As for the third draft Law, the proposed Articles 422 - 424 provide that the Permanent Electoral Authority will supervise the information campaigns and the production of the messages (radio and TV spots), and will pay for the announcements. The announcements will have to be aired 3-6 times daily, including once in the main news program, between 06.00 and 22.00. The National Audiovisual Council (CNA) will establish the list of ten radio stations and fifteen TV stations with national coverage, with informative programs in their schedule and the best audience during the previous year, involved in the campaigns. CNA will provide the Permanent Electoral Authority, within 30 days after the elections, with a detailed monitoring report on broadcasting of spots by TV and radio stations. For the areas where the minority population exceeds 20% of the population, the Romanian Television and Radio Romania (the public broadcasters) will also broadcast the messages in the languages of the respective national minorities.

Propunere legislativă pentru modificarea şi completarea art. 261 din Legea audiovizualului nr. 504/2002 - forma adoptată de Camera Deputaţilor

http://www.cdep.ro/pls/proiecte/docs/2018/cd374_18.pdf

Draft Law for amending and completing Article 261 of the Audiovisual Law no. 504/2002 - form adopted by the Chamber of Deputies

Propunere legislativă pentru modificarea şi completarea art. 261 din Legea audiovizualului nr. 504/2002 - expunere de motive

http://www.cdep.ro/proiecte/2018/300/70/4/em484.pdf

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Draft Law for amending and completing Article 261 of the Audiovisual Law no. 504/2002 - statement of reasons

Propunere legislativă pentru modificarea şi completarea Legii audiovizualului nr. 504/2002 - forma adoptată de Camera Deputaţilor

http://www.cdep.ro/pls/proiecte/docs/2018/cd413_18.pdf

Draft Law for amending and completing of the Audiovisual Law no. 504/2002 - form adopted by the Chamber of Deputies

Propunere legislativă pentru modificarea şi completarea Legii audiovizualului nr. 504/2002 - expunere de motive

http://www.cdep.ro/proiecte/2018/400/10/3/em536.pdf

Draft Law for amending and completing of the Audiovisual Law no. 504/2002 - statement of reasons

Propunere legislativă pentru modificarea şi completarea Legii audiovizualului nr. 504/2002, cu modificările şi completările ulterioare - forma adoptată de Camera Deputaţilor

http://www.cdep.ro/pls/proiecte/docs/2018/cd693_18__1_.pdf

Draft Law for amending and completing of the Audiovisual Law no. 504/2002, with further modifications and completions - form adopted by the Chamber of Deputies

Propunere legislativă pentru modificarea şi completarea Legii audiovizualului nr. 504/2002, cu modificările şi completările ulterioare - expunere de motive

http://www.cdep.ro/proiecte/2018/600/90/3/em916.pdf

Draft Law for amending and completing of the Audiovisual Law no. 504/2002, with further modifications and completions - statement of reasons

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