

[LT] Amendments to Lithuanian National Radio and Television Law (Law No. XV-981) enter into force

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*Sergei Bondarev
Independent expert*

On 2 June 2026, the Lithuanian Parliament (*Seimas*) adopted Law No. XV-981 amending the Law on Lithuanian National Radio and Television (LRT), the country's public service broadcaster. President Gitanas Nausėda signed the new law on 12 June and it entered into force the following day, with parts of it deferred until 1 January 2027 and 1 January 2028. Passed by 77 votes to one after the opposition had left the chamber, the text had been prepared by a cross-party working group convened after widespread public protests in December 2025.

The law changes the way LRT is governed and, in particular, the process for the removal of its director general before the end of their term of office. It enlarges the LRT Council from 12 to 15 members, shortens their terms from six years to four and limits them to two terms each. It also creates a five-member executive board, which will be appointed from 2028. It sets out possible grounds for the premature dismissal of the director general and changes the associated voting procedure: where an open ballot had previously been mandatory, the Council may now choose to vote in secret. During the drafting process, the national anti-corruption body, the "special investigation service", had warned that this change would weaken transparency.

Eight of the Council's 15 members are appointed by the political authorities – four by the President and four by the *Seimas* – and the remaining seven by professional and civil-society organisations. The new grounds for premature dismissal and the option to apply them through a secret ballot therefore rest with a Council in which the majority of members are appointed by political bodies. The two-thirds majority required to remove the director general is retained.

These amendments were adopted while they were still under examination by the European institutions. The European Commission had asked Lithuania, under Article 5 of the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) (Regulation (EU) 2024/1083), how it would safeguard the independence that the EMFA required of public service media. On 22 January 2026, by 385 votes to 165 with 35 abstentions, the European Parliament adopted a resolution (P10_TA(2026)0024) invoking the EMFA, especially Articles 5 and 21; it asked the Commission to monitor the reform, assess its compatibility with the EMFA, and use all available tools – including infringement proceedings under Article 258 of the Treaty on the

Functioning of the European Union – should it find non-compliance. The Venice Commission of the Council of Europe gave two opinions, in March and May 2026, recommending that any new grounds for dismissal apply only to directors general appointed after the law took effect; the law as adopted contains no such limitation, and therefore applies to the serving director general, Monika Garbačiauskaitė-Budrienė.

Article 5 of the European Media Freedom Act, applicable since 8 August 2025, requires that the management of public service media providers be appointed and dismissed under procedures laid down in advance, and that early dismissal be exceptional, justified and open to judicial review. The Commission's assessment of whether the new Lithuanian law meets this standard is pending, while the provisions creating the executive board will take effect on 1 January 2028.

Istatymas Nr. XV-981 dėl Lietuvos respublikos nacionalinės radijos ir televizijos įstatymo nr. I-1571 pakeitimo

<https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/2dacd33260c911f1aa9cfebedf36d56d>

Law No. XV-981 amending Law No. I-1571 of the Republic of Lithuania on National Radio and Television

European Commission request under Article 5 EMFA (VP Virkkunen)

<https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/2dacd33260c911f1aa9cfebedf36d56d>

European Parliament resolution of 22 January 2026, P10_TA(2026)0024 (procedure 2026/2568(RSP))

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-10-2026-0024_EN.html

