



*February 3, 2014*

## Parliament postpones discussions on amendments to Audiovisual Media Law

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The Conference of Chairmen of the Parliament convened on February 3 and one of the decisions was to postpone for two weeks the review of the amendments to the Audiovisual Media Law. The official statement of the parliament was that the Parliamentary Media Commission will postpone the discussion in order to wait for the opinions of the OSCE experts on this proposed amendment. This opinion is expected in the period 17-21 February. The commission will set a date for discussing the amendment, pending on expert opinion.

The amendment to the Media Law was presented by the Deputy Chair of the Parliamentary Commission on Media Alfred Peza (Socialist Party.) The amendment aims to elect new members of the Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA.) This amendment has been contested by members of the opposition, claiming that it threatens the independence and continuity of the institution. At the same time, MP Alfred Peza has called on the regulatory members to serve as a transition to the re-constitution of the authority and refrain from making important decisions, since the current members do not have the authority to make these decisions.

According to a memo submitted by the Socialist Party MPs to support the amendment, the mandate of the current chairwoman has expired. In its position, the memo distinguishes the mandate of the chairman of the regulator from that of the member, claiming that one has to be voted as a member to serve as a chair of the regulator. Ms. Bushati has been reelected as a chair of the regulator in July 2011. However, the memo maintains that this re-election was valid only until September 2012, when her mandate as a member expired, and then she had to be re-voted to serve as member and chairwoman. Hence, the memo concludes that since she has not been voted again for a new mandate as a member she has had no right to serve as chair of the regulator since September 2012.

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