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Process of election of public broadcaster bodies is under way

In December the Parliamentary Media Commission proceeded with the hearing session of 65 candidates for the 10 future members of the Steering Council of public Radio Televizioni Shqiptar (RTSH.) The candidates were nominated by civil society, academia and other groups representing minorities or other interest groups. It was the first time that the Commission also held hearing sessions with the candidates, in addition to reviewing their CVs for the post they were proposed. According to the ruling majority, electing new members of the Council was a priority, since the mandates of all members had expired for more than a year now, along with the mandates of governing structures of RTSH. Currently the Commission is discussing the candidates and is supposed to shortlist the final candidates, who will then be voted in plenary session. The short listing will take place having in mind the political balance, namely five candidates will be shortlisted by opposition MPs and the other five by the ruling majority.

Parallel to this, the Commission started procedures for electing the chair of the Steering Council in December, who should be elected no longer than ten days after the Council has been elected. The Parliamentary Commission should discuss at least four candidates for the post, while the opposition MPs can eliminate two candidates. The remaining two will go to plenary session for the final vote. At the moment four candidates have presented their application for this post: Mr. Kristaq Traja, a lawyer, who has also served a 10 year-mandate as a Judge at the ECHR; Mr. Mero Baze, publisher of daily Gazeta Tema, who has also served previously as chairman of Steering Council, Mr. Artan Mullai, writer and columnist at Gazeta Shqip, and Mr. Ylli Pata, political reporter and currently Director of Information at Albanian Telegraphic Agency.

Meanwhile, the deputy chair of the Commission, Mr. Alfred Peza, has presented an amendment to the law, which aims to elect new members of the Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA.) The chairman of the Commission, Mr. Genc Pollo, has declared that the opposition is against this amendment, asking also for the opinion and legal review of international organizations and OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. Ms. Dunja Mijatovic has expressed the readiness of her office to assist with legal expertise,

highlighting the importance of independence of the regulator. She also stressed the important task of the Commission in selecting highly professional members in the Steering Council as a key step in reforming the RTSH.

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