

Hungary: ARTICLE 19 condemns Media Authority refusal of license to Klubrádió

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21 Dec 2011

ARTICLE 19 condemns the recent decision of the Hungarian *National Media Infocommunications Authority* (“Media Authority”) to refuse Klubrádió’s application for a renewal of its broadcasting license. Klubrádió’s prospective closure means the silencing of Hungary’s only remaining independent radio station and a significant blow to the media pluralism in the country.

“The Media Authority’s decision on Klubrádió – which appears politically motivated – is another indication of the deterioration of media freedom and pluralism in Hungary since the adoption of the regressive media laws earlier in 2011” said Dr Agnes Callamard, ARTICLE 19 Executive Director. She went on: *“It shows the expansive licensing power of the Media Authority in practice and how the Media Authority is not willing to heed the expert advice of international monitors, including ARTICLE 19, not to close Klubrádió. We call upon the Media Authority to immediately revoke its decision and grant the broadcasting license to Klubrádió”*.

Klubrádió is a highly popular radio station with about half a million daily listeners. It carries public service style programming including interactive phone-in debates, a unique forum where figures from a broad political spectrum can participate. A testament to its popularity is the fact that Klubrádió listeners donated €500,000 in order to keep the station going in the face of depleting advertising revenue. (This amount is more than three times as much as a fund sent up by the government to which citizens can

donate to reduce the state debt.) Klubrádió's frequency has been allocated to a new media company, founded only this year with 1 million HUF (3300 USD) capital, and with no reference of any work ever done.

ARTICLE 19 has previously written to the Media Authority expressing its concern that the broadcasting license of Klubrádió would not be renewed as a way to stifle political speech in Hungary. The International Partnership Mission to Hungary, which took place in November 2011 and included ARTICLE 19, conveyed a similar message to Ms Annamaria Szalai, the President of the Media, and her advisors but apparently to no avail.

Hungary's media laws – which allocate the Media Authority extreme discretionary powers on licensing matters – have been strongly criticised by a range of actors, including the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, the OSCE and the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression as well as international media freedom organisations, notably ARTICLE 19.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- For more information contact: Sejal Parmar, Senior Legal Officer, ARTICLE 19 at sejal@article19.org or +44 20 7324 2500.
- For the statement of the International Partnership Mission to Hungary of 17 November 2011 [click here](#)
- For ARTICLE 19's letter to the Media Council of 11 November 2011 [click here](#)
- For ARTICLE 19's statement on Klubradio of 8 September 2011 [click here](#)

