

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/hongrie-media-council-deals-serious-blow-21-12-2011,41590.html>

Europe/Ex-USSR - Hungary

Anniversary decision

Media Council deals serious blow to broadcasting pluralism

21 December 2011

Reporters Without Borders strongly condemns yesterday's decision by Hungary's Media Council to strip *Klubradio*, the country's only national opposition radio station, of its broadcast frequency within a couple of months.

In a highly controversial move, *Klubradio's* frequency was put out to bid and was won by an unknown station calling itself *Autoradio*. *Klubradio*, which has had a loyal following of about half a million listeners for the past 10 years, will be able to continue broadcasting until March, when it will have to surrender the frequency.

The decision was announced on [the first anniversary](#) of the adoption of the media law that created the Media Council. The law was widely criticized for making precisely this kind of media freedom violation possible.

The allocation of broadcast frequencies is always a complicated exercise that often leaves disappointed candidates feeling cheated. But in this case, the Media Council's decision was clearly biased. It ignored the size of *Klubradio's* audience and the many years it has been broadcasting, and instead chose to give the frequency to a completely unknown station whose content will probably be much less critical.

We reiterate [the appeal that we have repeatedly made this year](#) for this law's repeal, especially as regards the Media Council's creation and the way it functions. The government of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has clearly failed to draw the lessons from the international outcry that overshadowed Hungary's European Union presidency and still limits the EU's ability to speak with authority on free speech issues.

At a time when Croatia is joining the EU, Hungary's government is adopting an increasingly repressive attitude to media freedom with the strange support of much of the country's political class, and is violating the democratic standards it is supposed to embody with increasing frequency. Many countries violate fundamental rights but, as an EU member and signatory of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, Hungary cannot keep doing it.
