

Media & Press EU response Lithuania Inclusion

The European Parliament condemns attempts to undermine media freedom in Lithuania

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On Thursday, the European Parliament adopted a resolution sounding the alarm over legislative and political attempts to undermine the independence of Lithuania’s public broadcaster (LRT). Resolution passes with strong majority amid international concerns over media independence

The European Parliament adopted a resolution Wednesday criticizing legislative measures in Lithuania that lawmakers say threaten the independence of the country's public broadcaster, Lithuanian National Radio and Television (LRT).

The resolution passed with 385 votes in favor, 165 against, and 35 abstentions. It condemns proposals to freeze and reduce LRT's funding, as well as changes that would weaken protections for the broadcaster's director general against dismissal.

According to the Parliament, these measures constitute political pressure incompatible with European Union law and constitutional guarantees. The resolution specifically criticized what it termed "ad personam legislation"—laws targeting specific individuals—as well as accelerated legislative procedures lacking transparency and secret voting mechanisms that could enable political interference while eroding democratic accountability.

The European Parliament urged Lithuania's Seimas (parliament) and government to reject pending amendments and repeal already-adopted measures that undermine LRT's independence. It called for stable, adequate, and predictable funding in accordance with the European Media Freedom Act and recommendations from the Venice Commission and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Representative on Freedom of the Media.

The resolution also requested that the European Commission monitor the situation closely and utilize all available enforcement tools, including infringement procedures, in cases of non-compliance with EU standards.

The Lithuanian government froze LRT's budget at €79.6 million for 2026-2028, blocking a proposed 11% increase and bypassing consultation with LRT management. Separately, parliament advanced amendments that would lower the threshold for dismissing LRT's director general from a two-thirds majority to a simple majority vote in the LRT Council.

These reforms followed a 2025 audit examining LRT's political neutrality. While the audit found no major bias, coalition parties, particularly the Nemunas Dawn party, used it to justify increased oversight and control of the broadcaster.

International Concerns

The proposed changes have drawn criticism from international media freedom organizations. Media Freedom Rapid Response partners, UNI Global Union, and the International Press Institute called for rejection of the amendments, urging public consultation and compliance with the European Media Freedom Act.

The moves have also sparked protests and strikes by LRT journalists, who warn that the changes could compromise editorial independence.

In its resolution, the European Parliament expressed solidarity with Lithuanian journalists and civil society, stating that safeguarding independent public service media is "a shared European responsibility and a cornerstone of EU values such as democracy, the rule of law, and fundamental rights."

The Parliament noted that independent media are particularly important in Lithuania given what it described as attempts to polarize society and undermine institutions through hybrid warfare tactics by Russia and other hostile actors.

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