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The EC is waiting for clarification in the case of Hungary's media package

The Hungarian government received a letter from the president of the European Commission that included a question about Hungary's media package which came into force at the turn of 2010 and 2011. As the letter states, the EC has serious doubts about the compliance of one of the provisions with the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the compliance of two elements of the media package with the EU audiovisual directive. The letter does not however address the frequently raised question of the politicisation of the Media Council because the *acquis communautaire* does not cover this area of law. This development of the situation seems to confirm the forecast that controversies surrounding this law will not lead to its repeal but only to formal changes that do not alter the essence of the new media law.

The EC is mainly concerned about an overly general wording of the requirement of "balanced information" and the possibility to use it in order to impose sanctions on the media. The EC doubted whether this provision complies with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. The two remaining questions address technical issues, including an obligation to register newly established media without categorising them according to the range of broadcast and the implementation of particular elements of the EU directive on audiovisual services.

The EC is waiting for a reply to its questions within two weeks. Should Hungary's reply prove unsatisfactory, the EU does not exclude the launching of administrative action. Budapest has declared its willingness to fully cooperate with the EC and its readiness to modify the provisions that turn out to be contrary to EU law – with the reservation that it will submit for the same procedure for media laws of other EU countries. <szyl>