



**LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS NUOLATINĖ ATSTOVYBĖ PRIE
EUROPOS TARYBOS
REPRÉSENTATION PERMANENTE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE
LITUANIE AUPRÈS DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE**

Matjaž Gruden
Director of the Directorate for Democracy
of the Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity
of the Council of Europe

Strasbourg, August 20, 2024
No. (77.1.1.4)S77-118

Dear Director,

I have the honor to forward herewith an answer of the Lithuanian authorities to the alert with regards to Lithuania that has been published on the *Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalist* on 21st of June 2024.

Please accept, Dear Secretary General, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Enclosure: 3 pages.

Sincerely,

Chargé d'affaires a. i.

Agne Martinez



LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS UŽSIENIO REIKALŲ MINISTERIJA
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Council of Europe Platform
to Promote the Protection of Journalism
and Safety of Journalists

2024-08-13 No. 5-507/2024

**RE: RESPONSE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA TO THE ALERT ANNOUNCED ON
THE COE PLATFORM TO PROMOTE THE PROTECTION OF JOURNALISM AND
SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS ON 21ST JUNE 2024 CONCERNING THE DRAFT
AMENDMENT TO THE LAW ON NATIONAL RADIO AND TELEVISION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA THREATENING PUBLIC BROADCASTER'S STABILITY**

We carefully examined the alert announced on the Council of Europe Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists on 21st June 2024 concerning the draft amendment to the Law on National Radio and Television of the Republic of Lithuania threatening public broadcaster's stability and forward you the response of Mr Mindaugas Lingė a member of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and Chair of the Committee on Budget and Finance.

We would like to reassure you that Lithuania is fully committed to the protection and promotion of freedom of expression and safety of journalists, both at the national and international level, and recognises the fundamental importance of freedom of the press for democracy. On September 4, 2023, Lithuania adopted 2023-2025 Action plan for the protection, safety and empowerment of journalists to establish and consolidate safeguards for the safety of journalists and to develop a mechanism to empower them, as well as to implement the EU Commission's Recommendation on the protection, safety and empowerment of journalists and other media professionals. Lithuania also supports the Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on public service media governance, adopted on 15 February 2012.

Encl., 2 pages.

Vice-Minister

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PRESIDENCY OF LITHUANIA
Council of Europe

PRESIDENCE DE LA LITUANIE
Conseil de l'Europe



**LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS SEIMO
BIUDŽETO IR FINANSŲ KOMITETAS**

**SEIMAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
COMMITTEE ON BUDGET AND FINANCE**

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European Broadcasting Union

No S-2024- of 7 July 2024

**REGARDING THE DRAFT LAW AMENDING ARTICLE 19 OF LAW NO I-1571 ON THE
NATIONAL RADIO AND TELEVISION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA**

Thank you for your interest in the Law on the National Radio and Television of Lithuania and your proposal to link the appropriations allocated from the state budget to the public institution Lithuanian National Radio and Television (LRT) to the growth of the nominal gross domestic product, which would help to maintain a depoliticised, objectively justified, and consistent growth of LRT appropriations, ensuring efficient management of state finance. Under legal regulation currently in force, LRT appropriations consist of 1.3% of the collected excise duties and 1% of the collected personal income tax (hereinafter referred to as PIT). It stands to reason that linking LRT appropriations solely to a certain percentage of excise duties and PIT is incorrect, because if these taxes need to be increased, LRT appropriations would automatically rise, which would not align with budgetary fairness. In fact, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania has recently increased a number of taxes, including excise duties, in order to ensure sufficient funds for enhancing the national defence capabilities. However, under the current regulation, part of this increase would automatically go to the LRT rather than the defence fund. We therefore believe that the LRT funding formula should not be subject to discretionary adjustments. Instead, a clear criterion for the growth of LRT appropriations should be established, linked to the growth of the national GDP as proposed by your organisation. This would provide an objective and politically independent basis for funding adjustments.

It should be noted that, during the consideration of the draft Law by the Committee on Budget and Finance, the draft Law was revised in the light of the comments submitted both by your organisation and by other institutions.

Following the revision, the draft Law now includes provisions on constitutionally sound funding of the national public broadcaster from the state budget. This means that no less funding will be provided to the LRT each year than the average of the state budget appropriations allocated to the LRT for the past three budget years. Please note that Article 19(5) of the Law on the National Radio and Television of Lithuania currently states that the amount of appropriations allocated to the LRT must be at least equal to the state budget appropriations allocated to the LRT in 2019, i.e. EUR 41.6 million. In order to ensure the stability and relevance of the appropriations allocated to the LRT, the draft Law has been revised to ensure that the amount of appropriations allocated to the LRT must be at least equal to the average of the state budget appropriations allocated to the LRT over the past three budget years. This means that the funding allocated to the LRT in 2026 must be at least equal to almost EUR 72 million (i.e. an increase of over than EUR 30 million compared to the legal regulation currently in force).

We would also like to draw your attention to the fact that the amendments proposed in the draft Law will be applied to the calculation and allocation of LRT state budget appropriations for 2026 and subsequent years.

Thank you for your comments. We look forward to smooth cooperation in the future.

Mindaugas Lingė
Chair of the Committee