

16
Jun 2020

▲ Lvl. 2

Resolved


Ukraine

n° 21/2020

Alert created on: 02 Mar 2020

The Work of the Ukrainian Public Broadcaster UA: PBC Blocked, all Accounts Arrested.

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ State

CATEGORY  ▶ Other acts having chilling effects on media freedom

PARTNER: EBU

On 18 February 2020, the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine initiated the executive proceedings to recover over 10 million euro from the UA:PBC bank accounts in favour of the joint stock company Euronews. UA:PBC inherited this debt as the successor in title of the former state-owned National Television Company of Ukraine (NTU). The cooperation of the NTU with Euronews began in 2010. Subsequently, payment of royalties under the agreement on the creation of the Ukrainian-language version of Euronews were suspended from the budget, which led to the debt and the lawsuit.

The accounts have been frozen to pay the creditor of the UA:PBC predecessor NTU. The freezing of accounts has already made it impossible to prepare for the broadcast of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic games, blocked participation of Ukraine in Eurovision-2020 and stopped the launch of new UA:PBC projects. In the near future, this act risks leading to complete halting of the activities of the public broadcaster. The public broadcaster has asked for the assistance of the Government, the Ministry of Culture as well as the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice. The Ukrainian minister of culture has promised to intervene and cover the debt, but for the moment there is no support from the authorities and the situation of the Ukrainian PSB is worsening.

Since 2017, professional and media organisations have been calling on the Ukrainian Government and Parliament to ensure appropriate funding for the public broadcaster in line with the Ukrainian law and with the Council of Europe standards notably the Council of Europe Recommendation 1878 (2009) on Funding of public service broadcasting and the principles for stable, accountable, fair and independent funding.

RESOLVED

16 Jun 2020: Following the decision of the Department of State Executive Service at the Ministry of Justice to unfreeze the UA:PBC accounts, the partner organisations to the

Platform declared this case to be “resolved”, concluding it is no longer an active threat to media freedom.

UPDATES

16 Jun 2020: On 2 June 2020, the Department of State Executive Service (the bailiff service) at the Ministry of Justice lifted the decision to freeze the public broadcaster’s accounts. As a result, since 3 June 2020, UA:PBC is free to use its funds. The company has begun to repay the debt inherited from former National Television Company of Ukraine from its own budget to prevent further blocking of its accounts, and plans to complete payments to Euronews by the end of the month.

➔ **UA:PBC press release: "Рахунки Суспільного мовника розблоковані"**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

➔ **Statement by EBU : "EBU calls on Ukraine to unfreeze UA:PBC bank accounts"**

➔ **UA :PBC press release**

STATE REPLIES



22 May 2020 | Reply from the Government of Ukraine

➔ **Official position of Ukraine**

FOLLOW-UPS

OSCE **02 Mar 2020** | OSCE Representative Désir calls on Ukrainian authorities to find swift and effective solution for unblocking accounts of public broadcasting company.

➔ **Statement by Harlem Désir**

RELEVANT COE INSTRUMENTS

02 Mar 2020 | PACE Recommendation 1878 (2009) on the funding of public service broadcasting

Recommendation 1878 (2009)

DISCLAIMER

This section presents a non-exhaustive selection of CoE instruments and ECHR case-law. This information is not a legal assessment of the alert and should not be treated or used as such.