
Hungary: independent radio Klubrádió to be silenced. European Federation of Journalists, “the EU cannot stand by”.

Hungary's independent radio Klubrádió will fall silent on 15 February, following yesterday's decision by a court in Budapest to reject its temporary license extension. The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) drew attention to the case in a statement, expressing “serious concern” over the decision that “will have far-reaching implications for what remains of media pluralism and independent journalism in the country”. Klubrádió will continue broadcasting exclusively on the internet, which represents “a significant win for the ruling Fidesz party and Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in their decade-long campaign to destroy one of the last remaining independent broadcasters which airs voices critical of the government”. The radio will appeal the decision and will have to legally confront a rival broadcaster that wants to obtain the airwaves so far used by Klubrádió. It will take a long time for the dispute to be resolved. Meanwhile, “the EU cannot stand by”, the Federation said in the statement, calling on the European Commission “to immediately engage with the Hungarian government to find a solution which will allow Klubrádió to remain on the airwaves after 14 February”. This is all the more urgent, for independent titles such as Index, Origo and Népszabadság have already disappeared from the Hungarian information landscape. “Hungary's government - the Federation denounced - is acting in direct contravention to Article 11 of the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights on freedom of expression and information”.

Valentina Bombelli