

The government agreed a joint complex of public media

Author: SF / Juraj Pokorný | Published: 26.05.2009

It is the legislators turn

The idea to combine public service media in a single centre has attracted conflicting reactions. While its supporters argue that their joint seat to ultimately become a significant cost-saving measure in time of economic decline, opponents persuade on the exact opposite: to touch such expensive project now means luxury, what the concessionaires and Slovak citizens can not afford...

Problems of proposals and their re-evaluation process did not develop straightforward. While in March still predominated clear situation in April Minister Maďarič (Smer-SD) shocked: the joint seat of public media, which was spoken about as a final, will probably not be. Why? It would require an amendment of legislation in parliament, which refers to the opposition of coalition partner KDU-CSL. „We consider it in the light of the crisis and the fact that there certainly will be necessary to change some laws and the necessary political support,“ he said for the SITA agency that time. Just a small shift in the angle of view and everything is turned by 180 degrees suddenly. The project, which should has become one of the crisis-proof measures, was temporarily questioned paradoxically by the crisis.

The head of the culture department, despite doubts, waived his ideas and proposed the tender for a supplier of the media centre, which should grow within 3 to 4 years in Landererova Street in the Pribinova zone, on the land belonging to the state, just behind the new SND building. Given the importance of the territory in the consideration it is the highest urbanity located at the heart of the growing citywide centre of Bratislava, which becomes a part of the rapidly growing left-bank part of the Danube River. A final decision by the executive in favour of a joint complex then fell on May 20, 2009. Now legislators are on the turn.

The project will not charge public sources

Maďarič believes that the project solves major problems of both public media in terms of unused capacity, energy consumption and technological backwardness of their buildings, as well as in relation to the financial crisis. How a valid argument for the creation of the media complex he indicates the technical and moral wear of 34-year high-rise building of Slovak Television (STV) in Mlynská dolina and 10 years younger seat of Slovak Radio (Ltd) in Mýtna Street. This causes various problems, leading to unnecessarily overpriced and complicated operation.

According to the minister of culture the project does not require public expenditures. It should be implemented in the public-private partnership (PPP) project, with the participation of a private contractor. Although Maďarič believes that the construction of the joint complex for STV and SRo is "effective, rational and progressive decision", the investment volumes, which requires the new public giant, is not negligible, even after the reduction of the original nearly 148 millions to the current more than 138 million Euro, from which the building part absorbs 90 652 593 and the technology part 47 367 722 €.

However, the division of costs between SRo and STV for the operation of the new seat is not known. If the ratio 30: 70 would be used usual in the payment for the services to public, the broadcasting budget would be charged by 299 million crowns (9 924 982 €) per year according to its general director Miloslava

Zemková. That's also why she thinks that during the economic crisis the resources are not. The idea of television functioning in the reverse pyramid is not real by her opinion - she cannot imagine where it would be here placed all its production facilities, studios and an archive. Technological renewal of broadcasting and production sites, however, would do, even if the entire complex began building.

Determined term and rules of the game

Designed is also the fate of the existing settlements of both Bratislava public institutions. The radio pyramid will continue using the Symphony orchestra of SRo as a concert studio and simultaneously as a seat of historical archives of STV and SRo. Externally fixed structure does not mean that the interior spaces can not be flexibly adjusted. The new gallery of modern art should be financially sustained by sales of the current building of STV in Mlynská dolina.

The media centre would be building three years, and its full functionality counted within five years. Some doubts still remain. The public media still does not know from where they can pay for the rental in the pyramid (after the transfer of STV and SRO buildings, still in their possession, to the state) and simultaneously for the medial complex. Fees of concessionaires - customers of electricity - form the three-fourth of their income. Also, „good location“ of the complex can be turn to its damnation in rush hours.

The proposal determines a deadline for the public procurement of construction, technology and operation of the media complex to the end of this year. And the rules of the game: the private partner, which will operate and maintain it for 25 years, is not allowed to use resources from EU funds and the diction with him concluded contract must exclude the inclusion of the project to the public debt. The initiator of the complex, which will require changes of laws on the STV and SRo, expects to be sufficiently supported in the Parliament. And finally important information more: the joint seat of both the public media allegedly does not mean the legal union under one leadership.

Images - author, MK and SR flickr.com

1, 2, 3 - The current state of the space behind the new building of SND, where the media complex will grow

4 - Maison de la Radio, once the seat of ORTF in Paris

26.05.2009 08:00, SF / Juraj Pokorný