

Dear Sirs/Madams,

Romania TV, the leading news television in Romania, would like to bring to your attention an extremely serious situation involving tens of journalists from our newsroom.

We were surprised to find that tens of employees of the station (anchors, producers, assistants, editors, managers, directors) from Romania TV were summoned by the Prosecutor's Office to be questioned as witnesses after the station broadcasted several sensitive recordings with former deputy and businessman Sebastian Ghita, who disappeared before Christmas, last year. In our opinion, this is an extreme form of intimidation and pressure against those who had the courage to make public these videos confirmed by the state authorities.

The only link between Romania TV and the former deputy, who is currently under investigation and internationally wanted, is the fact that he was the founder of the station. After the disappearance, Sebastian Ghita has released a series of eight recordings in which he made serious allegations against SRI's Florian Coldea and Laura Codruta Kovesi, the chief prosecutor of the National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA). The videos have been broadcasted first by Romania TV and, immediately, by the entire Romanian media. The leaks had the effect of an earthquake, with top level resignations and dismissals. The first interview with the former deputy was broadcasted last year on December 28th. Two weeks later, Lieutenant-General Florian Coldea, the first deputy director of the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI), resigned from this position, after a series of allegations against him launched by the former deputy.

He said that Coldea blackmailed former Prime Minister Victor Ponta by proposing Laura Codruta Kovesi for the position of DNA chief prosecutor, in 2013. In another video, Ghita claimed that Coldea had threatened Ponta that he would go to jail if he signed the contract for the public private partnership to build the Comarnic-Brasov highway.



According to the businessman, SRI helped DNA in fabricating cases against powerful Romanian politicians and business people, including some of the biggest media owners in Romania. This is a brief description of the recordings' content and Romania TV broadcasted the videos considering them, without any doubt, a powerful public interest message.

The pressure against Romania TV is not a coincidence. Romania's General Prosecutor, Augustin Lazar, has accused televisions broadcasting debates about justice and where the guests, politicians and analysts, "misinform the ignorant people". At the same time, some of the members of the National Audiovisual Council of Romania (CNA), the authority supposed to guarantee the public interest, is making pressure and statements in order to force the closing of the main news television in Romania.

Romania TV will continue to work with all the state institutions and comply with their requests, but at the same time, to ask questions on behalf of the public interest when it notices that high rank officials abuse their positions for personal purposes. At the same time, Romania TV will keep fulfilling its mission as „democracy guardian” because the freedom of expression guaranteed by the Constitution allows the approach of any public interest topic without restriction or fear of prosecution.

Romania TV is asking all the European and international institutions and organizations protecting the freedom of the media to analyse this situation. Your feedback is highly appreciated.

Sincerely Yours,

Catrinel Gheorghe, Executive Manager

Catalin Popa, Editorial Director

Eugen Chelemen, Editor in Chief

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