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LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE POLISH TRADE UNIONISTS

Prague, 9.9.2009

Dear Colleagues,

Reports that have been coming in the last weeks from the media scene of the Republic of Poland show that the independence of the public service media and thus the freedom of speech in Poland - EU member state are fatally threatened.

Cancellation of license fees as a primary source of funding, about which recently decided the Polish Parliament, should be followed - according to the original promises of Polish lawmakers - by a creating separate chapter in the state budget from which the Polish TV and radio public service should be adequately funded. However, as we are coming to know, this did not happen. Funding of public service media was in the opposite seriously disrupted with the result that in the Polish television and radio has occurred the deep crisis threatening the destruction of fundamental values attained in the dual system of public service media. There is also threatened the creative potential represented by experienced TV and radio staff. The adopted change in the financing of the Polish public service media already delivers ominous fruit in the form of a program filling forced reduction in both media and an incidental layoff of employees.

We want you, dear colleagues, in this uneasy moment to express full support of the workers of Czech public service media, which are represented by the Trade Union Media at this moment.

We express this support not only as feelings of sympathy and collegiality between the Polish and Czech media since distant past, and which were expressed on the part of the Polish Trade Union Solidarity by supporting the Czech TV staff at the time a TV strike in 2000. We are expressing it too with full knowledge of the same kind of danger that the Czech public service media ambush in the form of identical legislative proposal to amend their financing. The one of the most influential political party ODS, has already transmitted such proposal to the Senate Czech Republic. Events on the Polish media scene, as well as preparatory steps of Czech politicians, especially this party which has previously pushed through a series of steps to limit the independence of public service media, do not let no one doubt that in the former countries of Central and Eastern Europe exists a systemic pressure of certain political forces towards the subjugation of the media and so restrictions of the public's right to obtain on free information.

It must be made not only a strong protest against these efforts, but also at once must be quickly found effective means for defence of independence and the pure existence of public service media.

Best regards

Jiri Hubicka

chairman OS Media Trade Union of Mass Media Czech Republic

