

# **February 26, 2013 Reminder for broadcasters of the rules regarding the confirmed candidates for local elections**

The Broadcasting Council reminds broadcasters that individuals who were confirmed by the competent electoral authorities as mayor candidates or local government council members, may not appear in the programmes of the radio and television stations from the moment of confirmation to the start of the election campaign.

Pursuant to the Rulebook on the conduct of broadcasters in the period prior to the election campaign, "broadcasters may not broadcast election media presentation before the start of election campaign" (Article 4). This provision derives from Article 69-a of the Election Code which defines the meaning of the term election campaign. Namely, election campaign, among other things, means "election media ... presentation ... of the candidates confirmed by the competent election authorities and their programmes."

Therefore, media reporting on the activities of confirmed candidates will mean starting the election campaign before its official start (on March 4, 2013), and will represent a violation of the Election Code and the Rulebook on the conduct of broadcasters in the period before the start of the election campaign.

In cases where confirmed candidates are also current office holders, broadcasters can inform in the news only on those of their regular activities that are closely related to the

performance of their office. Thereby, the method of reporting should not be in favour of their campaign (Article 12 of the Rulebook), that is, office holders should not be found in a privileged position over the other confirmed candidates (reporting on activities that constitute election campaign, such as opening of public facilities – schools, health facilities, etc., or other events deliberately created in order to attract more media attention).