



## NEWSLETTER

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### Regional Conference of Media Regulatory Authorities Held



On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of its foundation, in September, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services hosted a conference of the media regulatory authorities in the region. Attending the Conference were representatives of the regulatory authorities of Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo and Bulgaria, as well as representatives of civic organizations active in the media sphere, institutions and media professionals.

The participants in the Conference discussed the professional journalistic standards in the media programmes and the role of the regulatory authorities; political pluralism outside the electoral cycles and the media policy influence on the development of media literacy.

As regards the professional standards, which are subject to self-regulation virtually all around the region, it was concluded that self-regulation mechanisms should be strengthened and cooperation among the regulatory and self-regulatory bodies intensified. As for pluralism, it was underlined once again that media need to report on the events objectively and without bias, ensuring equal treatment of diverse views and opinions, so as to enable the public to freely form their opinion about each particular event and issue. The experiences that the regulatory bodies presented concerning their role and competences with regard to media literacy indicated that practices in the region varied. Although the majority of regulatory bodies do not have any formal responsibility, they still work actively on the promotion of media literacy.

### Regulatory Bodies of Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Macedonia Hold Bilateral Meeting



With the aim of expanding mutual relations and exchanging experiences in the sphere of media regulation, representatives of the Agency held bilateral meeting with representatives of the regulatory authority for electronic media of the Republic of Bulgaria.

The participants in the meeting discussed a number of issues, focusing on the practical experiences of the two regulators in monitoring media coverage during electoral processes and the activities of the Agency in the sphere of media literacy development.

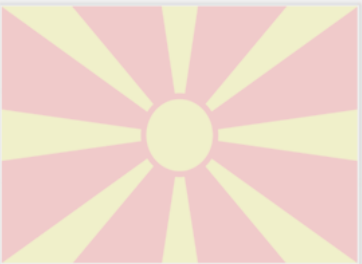
The representatives of the Bulgarian Electronic Media Council also exchanged experiences with the Members of the Agency Council in terms of their role, competences and manner of operating.

### Interview on the Cooperation between the Media Regulatory Authorities of Macedonia and Bulgaria for Kanal 5 TV



Following the bilateral meeting held between the two media regulatory authorities, Agency Director Zoran Trajchevski and Member of the Electronic Media Council of the Republic of Bulgaria Maria Stoyanova had a joint interview for the Kanal 5 TV News.

As Director Trajchevski pointed out, the two regulatory authorities had had excellent cooperation for many years, which had facilitated the sharing of positive experiences and good practices and the harmonization of media-related regulations, especially with regard to the measures taken in the course of and outside the election cycles. The entire interview can be viewed on the Agency's website [www.avmu.mk](http://www.avmu.mk).



## NEWSLETTER

### 2017 LOCAL ELECTIONS

Local Election Campaign started on Monday, 25 September 2017, in accordance with the schedule of electoral activities. The Agency notified all commercial broadcasters and the Public Broadcasting Service, in writing, that it would continue monitoring the media coverage of the elections, in line with the provisions of the Electoral Code implemented during election campaigns.

#### Ten-Day Coverage Monitoring Reports until the Start of the Election Campaign

In September, the Agency published three ten-day reports about how broadcasters were reporting on the 2017 Local Elections. The reports were based on the Agency's monitoring of the overall programmes of the television and radio programming services at the state level, focusing on their reporting within one edition of their daily informative programmes aired at the prime time.

The report on monitoring media coverage of the elections in the period from 27 August until 5 September 2017 indicated that the broadcasters had continued to follow the already established editorial policies in their reporting. Quantitatively, the government was the most present, through reports on both its internal- and its external-political activities, spotlighting in particular the visit by the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Greece, Nikos Kotzias, to the Republic of Macedonia.

Alfa TV and Nova TV's reporting in this period manifested disrespect for the professional principle of ensuring equal treatment of diverse viewpoints. Additionally, Nova TV had demonstrated disrespect for the principle of presumption of innocence.

The ten-day report covering the period from 6 until 15 September 2017, showed that the majority of television and radio stations abided by the professional standards, some of them taking a critical stand towards the government. Yet, several programming services have manifested deviance from this practice. The general conclusion was that, in addition to the regular everyday information, the media outlets also addressed the topic of 'local elections', increasingly implementing an analytical approach, as this was a period of official party mayoral candidacies, expiry of the deadline for access to the unique Voters' List and start of the election campaign. During this period, in its reporting on the political parties, the MRT 1, was fully focused on the two largest ones – of both the opposition and the government ranks – and virtually did not report on the other parties or independent candidates who were also preparing candidate lists and had other activities as well. The way Alfa TV and Nova TV reported was in violation of the principle for objective and unbiased depiction of the events, providing equal treatment for the diverse standpoints and opinions. The Radio Slobodna Makedonija (Radio Free Macedonia), on the other hand, was focused on conveying information about one political party while providing minimum information about other political parties.

The last report on the period preceding the election campaign, which covered the period from 16 to 24 September 2017, based on the findings of the monitoring of broadcasters' reporting strictly on the topic of local elections, found that the news items and reports on the concluding organizational activities conducted by the State Election Commission were the ones most present. In this reporting period, too, the MRT1 failed to follow the provision under its Rules for Media Coverage of the 2017 Local Elections whereby it would "ensure balanced reporting about the activities of the political parties in the government and in the opposition represented in the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia" in its news until the start of the election campaign. Nova TV and Alfa TV remained focused on the information about the related activities, standpoints and reactions of the largest opposition party, although to a lesser extent than in the previous reporting periods. Radio Slobodna Makedonija re-ran the show "Zemjo Makedonska" (O, Macedonian Land), which abounded in vulgar and indecent vocabulary, and, as such, was in contrast with the professional principle of fostering and developing human and moral values and protecting the individual's privacy and dignity.

All information and reports related to the 2017 Local Elections are available on the Agency's website, [www.avmu.mk](http://www.avmu.mk), under the separate banner titled ELECTIONS 2017.





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### Supervision over Broadcasters

#### Regular Supervisions

The Agency conducted programme supervision over NOVA TV with regard to its obligation to meet the quotas for European works and works by independent producers, and found that it had met the legal provisions. With regard to different legal provisions, programme and administrative supervision was conducted over the MRT 2, which was found to have failed, in some of its programmes, to publish data that broadcasters are obligated to air at an appropriate slot in each of the contents of their programming services. Thus, the promotional announcements about the feature programme titled “Bisha e madhe” (Albanian, meaning The Big Beast) had been aired without being labeled by the visual sign signaling the category of the programme being announced; the legal obligation to air minimum 60 % of the programme originally created in the RM in the languages of the non-majority communities had not been met, and part of the live transmission of the World Championship in Athletics in London was aired without an Albanian translation or translation into the other languages of the non-majority communities in which the MRT airs its programme. Due to these detected offences, the Agency imposed three warning measures on the MRT 2.

Regular programme and administrative supervision was conducted over the MRT1, as well, concerning the obligation to publish an impressum; air information that should be made available to the users; the broadcaster’s identification sign; the obligation to meet the quota for music in the Macedonian language or the languages of the ethnic communities that do not constitute a majority in the RM, and the quota for originally created programme in the Macedonian language or the languages of the non-majority communities in the RM; the use of language in the programme; the rules for airing audiovisual commercial communications; product placement; sponsorship, and minors’ protection. The supervision showed that all the legal obligations concerned had been met.

#### Ad Hoc Supervisions

As regards the observance of the principles for performing the relevant business activity, the Agency conducted two ad hoc programme supervisions ex officio, over the NOVA TV. The first supervision found that, by a number of statements made in the “Open Studio” show, titled “For or Against Gay Marriages” (the title was displayed using telop), the NOVA TV had violated the principles for performing the broadcasting activity in terms of the equal human rights and freedoms on all grounds and in terms of the principle for objective and unbiased depiction of the events.

The second supervision referred to the daily information show “Daily Brief on NOVA”, more specifically to the item titled “Act of prosecution raised against the gynecologist who had been lying to a patient that she was pregnant”, where this media outlet revealed the identity of the gynecologist and condemned him in advance, thus violating the presumption of innocence principle. The Agency sent a notification in writing to NOVA TV about the detected non-observance of the legal provisions.

### Supervisions over the Operators of Public Electronic Communication Networks

The Agency performed regular programme supervision over the work of SKUPI KABLE Skopje and KABEL Strumica, concerning the rules for transmitting and retransmitting pornography; subtitling the programming services in the Macedonian language or the language of the community that does not constitute a majority, spoken by at least 20 % of the citizens in the RM, and for retransmitting programming services registered in line with the law and retransmitting programming services by domestic broadcasters only within the service area covered by the latter’s radio or TV broadcasting licenses. The supervision showed that both cable operators had been acting in line with the legal provisions. Ad hoc supervision was also conducted over the work of VVV-INTERNET GRUP from Kumanovo, regarding observance of the obligations under the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media services, which detected retransmission of the Tring Action programming service which had not been covered by the programming service registration certificate issued by the Agency.