**Guidelines on Paid Political Advertising for the 2020 Early Local Elections Adopted**

At its 41st session in 2020, held on 17 November 2020, the Agency Council adopted the [Guidelines on Paid Political Advertising for the 2020 Early Local Elections.](https://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/%D0%A3%D0%BF%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%9F%D0%9F%D0%A0.doc) Before its adoption, the Agency had opened a public debate in which it had invited all interested parties to submit their remarks, opinions and proposals.

The document specified the rules concerning the permitted duration of the paid political advertising per real hour of broadcasted programme, for those broadcasters that were to cover the Early Mayoral Elections in the municipalities of Plasnica and Shtip.

**Public Hearing Opened on the Agency’s Draft 2021 Work Programme and Draft Annual Administrative and Programme Supervision Plans for 2021**

On 13 November 2020, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services opened a public hearing on the texts of its Draft 2021 Work Programme (along with the [Draft-Programme of Projected Activities](https://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/3.1.-%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%86%D1%80%D1%82-%D0%9F%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B3%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B0-2021-%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0-1.doc) and [Draft-Financial Plan of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services](https://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/3.2.-%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%86%D1%80%D1%82-%D0%A4%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%BE%D1%82-%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%BD-%D0%B7%D0%B0-2021-%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0.doc)), [Draft Annual Administrative Supervision Plan for 2021](https://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2.1.-%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%86%D1%80%D1%82-%D0%93%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%88%D0%B5%D0%BD-%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%BD-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%B2%D1%80%D1%88%D0%B5%D1%9A%D0%B5-%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%BC%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%B2%D0%B5%D0%BD-%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B7%D0%BE%D1%80-%D0%B2%D0%BE-2021-%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0.doc), and Draft Annual Programme Supervision Plan for 2021 .

The Agency called on all interested parties to take part in the public hearing by submitting its opinions and proposals in a written form, electronically, to contact@avmu.mk , or by mail to the following address: ul. Makedonija br. 38, 1000 Skopje.

The public hearing shall be open until 13 December 2020.

Agency Director Zoran Trajchevski took part in the regional conference on “Addressing the Challenges Posed by Disinformation in the Western Balkans,” which was held online on 11 and 12 November 2020. The conference was organized by the Regional Cooperation Council, in co-operation with OBC TransEurope, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and Hybrid CoE.

The Conference was aimed at raising awareness in the Western Balkans on how to address disinformation, and at producing policy recommendations based on the best practices from across Europe, taking into account regional dynamics and the potential for international cooperation.

**Agency Director Takes Part in the Regional Online Conference on Addressing the Challenges Posed by Disinformation in the Western Balkans**

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At the panel discussion dedicated to the institutional perspective of addressing disinformation, Director Trajchevski pointed out that there was a rising influx of disinformation, related to current events. In the race for exclusivity and for winning a larger audience, most countries, including ours, have faced the emergence of disinformation or insufficiently verified information, which had caused an additional problem in dealing with and protecting against Covid-19. The Agency had reacted publicly on several occasions and called for respect for the professional journalistic standards, underlining the need for providing the citizens with accurate and timely information. One of the most powerful tools in the fight against disinformation is media literacy, on the promotion and development of which the Agency has been working actively along with the members of the Media Literacy Network. In this, equally important is the promotion and raising of professional journalistic standards in reporting.

“All of us – be it regulators, civil society associations, journalists’ associations, or state institutions – we are all faced with numerous challenges. Yet, we must not forget that we all share a common goal: – having professional media and media literate citizens,” Director Trajcevski said at the panel discussion.

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**Press Release**

Following certain publicly expressed reactions that the daily news programme of the national television channel of Telma TV lacked information on the activities and views of the largest opposition party regarding the current social and political issues, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services issued a Press release on 23 November 2020, I order to remind that one of the fundamental programme principles on which the broadcasters’ programmes rest is the objective and impartial presentation of the events, providing equal treatment for the diverse viewpoints and opinions and enabling the audience to freely form its opinion on certain events and issues.

The press release underlined that media outlets were independent in creating their editorial policies, but political pluralism was vital to the development and preservation of democratic societies. Therefore, media must be aware of their role and responsibility in creating the public opinion, i.e. of their obligation towards the public to make their programmes open to diverse political views.

**Programme and Administrative Supervisions Conducted over Broadcasters**

The Agency performed regular administrative supervision over all 115 broadcasters that broadcast television or radio programme, in terms of their obligation to publish, for the third time this year (no later than October 31), as part of their own programmes, data on their ownership structure, editorial staff and the funding sources during the previous year, and to submit recordings of the announcement to the Agency within 15 days from the day of the announcement. The supervision showed that all 115 broadcasters had fulfilled their legal obligation.

The TV stations that broadcast programs at the local level – Kanal Festa TV, Spektra TV, Plus TV, Zdravkin TV and Uskana Media TV – underwent regular programme and administrative supervisions regarding several legal obligations: daily broadcast of at least 6 hours of TV programme and airing of at least 30% of originally created programme, the obligations concerning language use in the broadcasters’ programmes, the publication of Impressums, information that should be made available to the users, publication of the broadcaster’s identification, observance of the relevant rules when broadcasting audiovisual commercial communications, protection of the juvenile audience, use of value-added telephone services and telephone voting, airing of games of chance and providing quizzes or other forms of prize-winning participation.

During the supervision, it was concluded that, contrary to the law, Spectra TV had aired 4.60% of originally created programme, while Uskana Media TV had aired 8.30% of originally created programme. The supervision also found that, on 2 November 2020, Spectra TV had aired the movie "Unrivaled" as part of its programme with an incorrect label as Category 2, and had aired It at an inappropriate time of the day.

Plus TV was found to have committed four violations related to failure to provide information that should be made available to the users, broadcasting of an episode of the feature series "Siberia" at an inappropriate time of the day and night and carrying an incorrect categorization label, broadcasting of an entertaining show without "product placement" labels and airing of commercials longer than 12 minutes per real time, several times a day. Another establish violation was that of the rules on language use in the programme, i.e. an item had been aired in English and German (with Russian subtitles), while the inserts from the "Teen Movies You Must Not Miss" were broadcast originally in English, without providing translation into Macedonian or Serbian, in which this media outlet broadcasts its programme in accordance with the license.

Zdravkin TV was found to have aired split screen pop-up ads within the editions of its entertainment and news shows "VIP for a Day" and "55 Minutes", without ensuring the required minimum of 15 minutes in between them.

As regards the observance of the obligations arising from the Rulebook on Minimum Technical, Spatial, Financial and Staffing Requirements for obtaining a license for radio and television broadcasting, an ad hoc administrative supervision was performed on Albana Plus Radio from Kumanovo, Medison Radio from Kichevo and Puls Radio from Kavadarci. The supervision showed that the broadcasters had met the minimum staffing requirements laid down in the Rulebook.

In order to determine whether the decisions for imposing a public warning measure had been acted upon, issued due to various legal violations, the Agency performed control supervision over K&M Kiss & Menada TV, Polog TV, Sonce TV, Shenja TV, Klan Macedonia TV, Macedonian Radio Television MRT2, 21-M Kompani TV. Kanal Vis TV , Shutel TV, Radio Zona M1 and Sky Radio.

The control supervision showed that 21-M Kompani TV had not act accordingly upon the public warning measure, i.e. on 13 October 2020, it had failed to label the promotional announcements for the series "Kalbimdeki Deniz" and "Champion" with appropriate visual signs, i.e. warning signals about the category of the programme being announced.

**Public Warning Measures Imposed**

At its 39th session, held on 6 November 2020, the Agency Council adopted a decision to impose a public warning measure against JON Radio from Struga, due to failure to publish the data it is obligated to air at an appropriate place on each of the contents of its programme service.

Jon Radio was directed to harmonize its operations with the provisions of the Law on Media within 45 days from the date of receipt of the above Decision.



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