**August 2021 No.8**

**Agency Starts Monitoring Broadcasters’ Coverage of 2021 Local Elections**

The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services informed the public on 6 August 2021 that it was starting to monitor the broadcasters’ coverage of the 2021 Local Elections in their media outlets.

In the period until the beginning of the election campaign, subject to monitoring shall be the first TV channel of the Public Broadcaster, MRT1, and six national commercial television stations that have an average weekly reach of above 10%: Sitel TV, Kanal 5 TV, Telma TV, Alsat M TV, Alfa TV and 24 News TV. All other programme services shall be monitored in case of complaints against them.

The monitoring shall cover their entire programmes, focusing in particular on their central news editions and special information programmes involving representatives of the government (both state and local), political parties, and other potential participants in the elections. Also monitored shall be all other programmes involving potential participants in the elections, regardless of the reasons for their appearance.

Just as before, the Agency has placed a banner on its website containing all materials relevant to the election process – election-related laws and bylaws, complaint forms, publications, reports, etc. Bearing in mind the fact that the announcement of the Local Elections, scheduled on 17 October 2021, has placed into force all the provisions of the Electoral Code entered into force, the Agency reminded all broadcasters about the provisions relevant to their reporting and operations in the period before the start of the election campaign. The content of the letter is available at this [link](https://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Potsetuvanje-za-obvrskite-spored-Izborniot-zakonik-pred-pocetokot-na-izbornata-kampanja-do-site-radiodifuzeri.pdf).

**Press Release**

On 17 August 2021, reacting to the public protest, organized by a group of citizens against the new measures for preventing the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic, at which the participants chanted insults and vulgar messages against the journalists, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services underlined that this attitude constituted a direct attack on media freedom and the right of the public to be informed.

The Agency condemned all forms of denigrating and verbally insulting journalists and urged to respect the dignity of journalistic profession, as well as media professionals’ personal dignity.

At the same time, the Agency pointed out that providing conditions for unhindered functioning of media workers is the sine qua non of freedom of information.

**Supervisions over Operators of Public Electronic Communication Networks**

Regular programme supervision concerning the obligations related to the programme services registration with the Agency and the subtitling of programmes retransmitted by the operators, was performed on Kabel Net, Kabel-L-Net, Skupi Kable, Viva Net, Multimedia – Net and Telenet Kom.

The supervision concluded that the operator Kabel-Net from Strumica had been retransmitting, for its users, the programme service of "Film Box Extra", which was not included in the programme services registration certificates issued by the Agency, and was thus in violation of Article 141 of the LAAVMS.

# **Public Warning Measures Imposed on Broadcasters and Operators of PECNs**

At its 23rd session held on 24 August 2021, the Agency Council adopted decisions to take a public warning measures against Edo TV, Siti Television, Koha TV and KTV Kavadarci, based on the supervision findings.

A public warning was issued agains Edo TV due to failure to include a warning signal marking "programme containing product placement" in an entertaining and documentary show, failing to broadcast at least 30% of programme originally created as Macedonian audiovisual works, or at least half of the legal minimum for originally created programme as Macedonian audiovisual works, as well as for having aired split-screen pop-ups/commercials without observing the prescribed 15-minute distance in between, and failing to publish Impressums in its show editions, although these should be broadcasted at an appropriate place for each content of the programme service .

A public warning was issued against Siti Television due to failure to include warning signalization and publish Impressum data in show editions, which should be broadcasted at an appropriate place for each of the contents of the programme service. Koha TV was issued a public warning due to failure to air half of the prescribed originally created programme of Macedonian audiovisual works, while KTV Kavadarci received a public warning for having broadcasted split-screen pop-ups/ without observing the prescribed 15-minute distance in between.

At the 23rd session, based on conducted supervision findings, which had detected retransmission of a non-registered programme service in accordance with Article 141 of the LAAVMS, a Decision was adopted to impose a public warning against the operator Kabel-Net from Strumica, and for halting the retransmission of the programme service at issue.



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