

November, 2021

No.11

## Local Elections 2021

### Two Reports Adopted on Paid Political Advertising for the 2021 Local Elections

In November 2021, the Agency Council adopted two Reports on Paid Political Advertising in the Broadcasters' Programmes, one of which was for the first round of the 2021 Local Elections campaign (from 27 September until 15 October 2021), and the other one – for the second round of the campaign (from 18 until 29 October 2021). In Debar municipality, the second round of mayoral elections took place on 14 November 2021, due to which a separate Report on Aired PPA was prepared for the second round of the mayoral election campaign in Debar municipality covering the period from 1 until 12 November 2021. In accordance with the Electoral Code, the Reports on Paid Political Advertising have been submitted to the State Election Commission.

### Report on the Media Coverage of the Second Round of 2021 Local Election Campaign

On 5 November 2021, the Agency published the Report on the Manner of Broadcasters' Reporting during the Second Round of the Election Campaign (from 18 September until 29 October 2021). The monitoring covered a total of 13 programme services – the national commercial television stations of Alsat-M, Alfa, Kanal 5, Sitel, Telma, 24 Vesti, 21-M, Shenja and Klan Macedonia – and the programme channels of the Public Broadcaster – MRT1, MRT2, Parliament's Channel and the First Programme of the Macedonian Radio (MRA1). The monitoring results showed no violations of the provisions of the Electoral Code.

In the second round of the campaign as well, the daily news programmes kept the insights into the specific contents of the election platforms for municipalities' development in the background, giving priority – through reports, statements and announcements – to the 'loudness' of the (post-)rally inter-party duels, predominantly personified in the public appearances of the leaders of SDSM, VMRO/DPMNE, DUI, Besa and the Coalition between the Alliance of Albanians and Alternative. As regards the debates, the national broadcasters were mainly interested in the duels concerning the the City of Skopje and the Skopje municipalities of Centar, Karpos and Cair, as well as the larger Macedonian municipalities, such as Bitola, Kumanovo, Tetovo, Kicevo, Ohrid and Gostivar, i.e. the municipalities that had been highlighted as key to the position of the current coalitioning executive power of SDSM and DUI. The interviews appeared to be the editors' backup variant, in the second electoral round as well, for presenting the political offer, as certain broadcasters faced again with either an open boycott or some other reasons for avoiding the planned debates. MRT 1 and TV 24 Vesti were the only ones to provide coverage for persons with sensory impairments.

The Report on the Manner of Broadcasters' Reporting during the Second Round of the Election Campaign (from 18 September to 29 October 2021) is available on the website [www.avmu.mk](http://www.avmu.mk) under the "Elections 2021" banner.

## Media Literacy Days 2021 Take Place from 22 November until 2 December

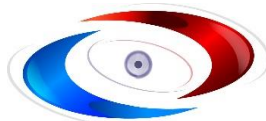


On 19 November 2021, Agency Director Zoran Trajchevski held a press conference that marked the beginning of the 2021 Media Literacy Days, which the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services and the Media Literacy Network organized in the period from 22 November until 2 December 2021.

*"The thematic setup of these Media Literacy Days arises from the latest developments in the field of media literacy in the country – the official introduction of media literacy in primary education curricula as an approach in teaching – which has certainly been contributed to by all joint efforts so far to promote media literacy among the citizens of all generations,"* the Agency Director underlined.

A series of events and workshops took place as part of the event, dedicated to building and developing critical awareness among children and young people, as well as among some other target groups that are directly or indirectly related to them.

All information related to the activities and events taking place during the Media Literacy Days were shared via the Network's communication channels, such as Twitter ([@MediumPismenost](https://twitter.com/MediumPismenost)), Instagram ([@mrezazamediumskapismenost](https://www.instagram.com/mrezazamediumskapismenost)), Facebook ([@MrezaZaMediumskaPismenost](https://www.facebook.com/MrezaZaMediumskaPismenost)) and the website [www.mediumskapismenost.mk](http://www.mediumskapismenost.mk).



**AGENCY FOR AUDIO AND  
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## NEWSLETTER

### **AAVMS and RESIS Hold Online Debate on Media Literacy**

As part of the 2021 Media Literacy Days, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services and the RESIS Institute held an online debate on 30 November 2021, on the topic of "Gender Analysis in Children's TV Programmes: Are We Building Critical Awareness in Children?" The discussion covered several segments, starting from the psychological impact of children's programmes on their growth and development, to the way in which media policies and their programmes intended for children should be created. In his introduction to the debate, Agency Director Zoran Trajchevski pointed out that, according to the findings, the Public Broadcaster had been pursuing a planned and well-thought-out programme policy regarding the children's population, but that this conclusion applied much more to MRT1 than to MRT2. As regards the programmes of the commercial television stations, the findings had shown that there was no well-thought-through or careful editorial approach in the selection of shows intended for different age groups of the juvenile audience.

Also presented at the event were the findings of the research titled "Analysis of the Gender Aspects in Children's Programmes Aired by the National Terrestrial Television Stations", which had been prepared for the needs of AAVMS. The results of this Analysis were the starting point for an excellent discussion that involved several representatives of the Public Broadcaster, civil society associations and institutions. The participants in the debate agreed that a great deal of work was required so as to create good-quality programme concepts and content that would meet the needs of children and young people and turn them into an audience that is critically aware and media literate.

### **AAVMS Donates Aid to the Families of the Deceased and the Passengers Injured in the Bulgaria Bus Crash**

The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services announced on 23 November that it had decided to grant financial assistance to the families of the Macedonian citizens who had passed away, as well as to those who had been injured in the bus accident that had taken place in the Republic of Bulgaria. The donation was in the amount of 60,000 Macedonian Denars for each deceased person. The injured passengers who had been hospitalized were granted financial assistance in the amount of 30,000 Macedonian Denars each. The funds shall be transferred through the Red Cross of the RNM. The Agency expressed its deepest condolences to the families and relatives of the deceased in this tragedy, and wished all injured persons a speedy recovery.

### **Donation Granted to the Broadcasters by Reducing the Amounts of 2022 License Fees**

As the Covid-19 Pandemic continues to exert its adverse effects on the general economic situation, while the emergence of an energy crisis is directly affecting broadcasters' economic sustainability, on 17 November 2021, the Agency announced that it would provide financial assistance to assist the radio and television stations in dealing with the negative consequences.

The donation will be carried out by means of reducing their television or radio broadcasting license fees for 2022, calculated according to the formula laid down in the Law on AAVMS. This reduction, considering the Agency's financial capacities, shall amount to 50% of the license fees. The Agency hopes that this donation will contribute to mitigating the consequences of the crisis and will facilitate broadcasters' work, i.e. will contribute to their smooth functioning next year, too.

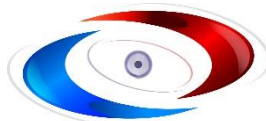
### **Press Release – Broadcasters Advised to Adjust their Programmes to the National Days of Mourning**

Following the devastating bus crash that took place in the Republic of Bulgaria, which took the lives of a number of Macedonian citizens, the Agency called on the media to abide by the professional journalistic standards and principles, i.e. to keep their reporting free from sensationalism and have their journalists respect personal pain and grief. As the Government of RNM declared the period from 23 to 25 November as the National Days of Mourning, the Agency informed the broadcasters to adjust their programmes accordingly and to air content that, by the nature of their media role, correspond to content suitable for days of mourning. Entertainment shows, comedy shows, or comedy-themed feature programmes that had been scheduled to be aired during these three days were to be rescheduled to other days of the week, while the music aired was to be of the music genres suitable for days of mourning. Airing advertisements was not recommendable during these three days, if the already concluded contracts allowed so.

### **Press Release**

The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services issued a press release on 20 November 2021, pointing out that the conduct of the security staff of the City Trade Center (GTC) and their attempt to remove the journalists while reporting on the meeting with the owners of the GTC stores, who seek an investigation into the cryptocurrency case, as extremely inappropriate.

In its press release, the Agency underlined that investigative journalism was the essence of journalists' profession and that it was crucial to performing the media role in modern democracies.



## NEWSLETTER

### **AVMS Guidelines Adopted on Monitoring the Implementation of Reporting Standards in Cases of Gender-Based Violence in the Media**

At its 32<sup>nd</sup> session held on 9 November 2021, the Agency Council adopted the [Guidelines of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services on Monitoring the Reporting Standards in Cases of Gender-Based Violence in the Media](#). The document was prepared by an expert hired by the Council of Europe under the project "Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in North Macedonia" – JUFREX 2, implemented by the Council of Europe and the European Union. The Guidelines, among other things, aim to provide media and all stakeholders with information needed to grasp the issue of reporting on gender-based violence in general.

### **Public Hearing Opened on the Texts of the Draft Work Programme of the Agency, and the Draft 2022 Annual Plans for Conducting Administrative and Programme Supervision**

On 17 November 2021, the Agency opened a public hearing on the texts of the 2022 Draft Work Programme of the Agency (including a [Draft Programme of Planned Activities](#) and [Draft Financial Plan of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services](#)), as well as a [2022 Draft Annual Plan for Administrative Supervision](#), and [2022 Draft Annual Plan for Programme Supervision](#).)

The Agency invited all interested parties to take part in the public hearing by sending their opinions and proposals in writing, electronically, to: [contact@avmu.mk](mailto:contact@avmu.mk), or by mail to the Agency's Postal and Archiving Department. The public debate shall last until 17 December 2021.

### **Supervisions over Broadcasters, Operators of PECNs and Providers of On-Demand Audiovisual Media Services**

#### **Broadcasters**

The Agency performed regular administrative supervision over all 111 broadcasters that air TV or radio programmes regarding the obligation to publish data on their ownership structure, the editor-in-chief/editors and the sources of funding throughout the previous year no later than 31 October 2021. The supervision showed that only Lav Radio from Ohrid had not fulfilled the obligation arising from Article 15, Paragraph 3, of the Law on Media. Regular programme and administrative supervisions regarding the observance of several legal obligations were performed over G-TV Televizija, Kanal 8 TV, Due TV, Gurra TV and Protel TV. The supervision of the programme of G-TV Televizija found failure to comply with the rules for protecting juvenile audience and the language use in the programme. Due TV had been disregarding the obligations concerning product placement, and had failed to provide information that should be made available to the users, as well as publish data that need to be aired at an appropriate slot of its programme service regarding the content of the programme. Gurra TV was found to have failed to provide information that should be made available to the users. Additionally, G-TV, Due TV and Gurra TV had not aired the required minimum of 30% of originally created programme.

Ad hoc programme supervision was performed ex officio over Siti Televizija, showing that the legally-required minimum of 30% of originally created programme had not been broadcasted. An ad hoc administrative supervision was also performed ex officio over Aktuel Radio and Nova TV, showing that neither of the broadcasters had met the minimum staffing requirements set out in the Rulebook on Minimum Technical, Spatial, Financial and Staffing Requirements for Obtaining a Radio or TV Broadcasting License. As these broadcasters had failed to harmonize their operations with the Rulebook within the additionally defined legal deadline, their radio/TV broadcasting licenses were revoked. After the expiry of the deadline for harmonizing one's work with the law, the Agency performed control programme and administrative supervisions regarding various legal obligations over Edo TV, Siti Televizija and Koha TV. The supervisions showed that, despite the public warning measure imposed, Siti Televizija had continued to disregard its obligation to protect minors, as well as to broadcast at least 30% of programme that has been created originally.

#### **Operators of Public Electronic Communication Networks**

The Agency conducted regular programme supervision concerning the obligations related to the registration of programme services with the Agency and to subtitling of the programmes retransmitted by the operators, over BIV Piramida, KDS-Kabel Net, Neotel, Skrembl and Vinsat Kabel. As regards the obligation of the PECN operators to include, as a must and free of charge, the programme channels of the public broadcaster in their programme packages, regular programme supervision was performed over 9 operators. The supervisions concluded that all operators subject to the supervision had fulfilled these obligations.

#### **Providers of On-demand AVMS**

A regular programme supervision was conducted over the provider of on-demand AVMS, A1 Macedonia, from Skopje, concerning the obligations to protect minors, transmit cinematographic works and promote the production of and access to European works, respectively. The supervision found no violations.

