**Press Releases**

With regard to the Draft-Law on Civil Liability for Insult and Defamation that had entered its first-reading phase in the Parliament of the RNM, on 7 February 2022, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services issued a press release emphasizing that calling to responsibility for an expressed "negative opinion", as defined, was contrary to all democratic practices and might provoke the media to self-censor themselves.

The possibility of sanctioning due to an expressed negative opinion leaves room for abuse and punishment of media professionals. Journalists are the voice of the public and they often criticize certain policies or phenomena in society in the course of their work, thus encouraging public debate and contributing to greater responsibility, accountability and transparency on the part of the government officials. The right to freedom of expression is a constitutionally guaranteed right and the same is guaranteed by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights. This right includes freedom to hold opinions and the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers, without the interference of the public authorities.

On 16 February, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services condemned, by means of a press release, the verbal and physical attack on the journalist crew of the regional Polog TV from Tetovo during their filming of insert shots for a reportage on the "Naim Frasheri" elementary school in the village of Gjurgjevishte, Gostivar region.

The statement underlined that media workers’ safety must not be endangered at any time, and maximum efforts should be made to create conditions for media’s professional performance of their work. The competent institutions’ timely and appropriate reaction is key to resolving this case and to preventing such and similar incidents from happening in the future.

**World Radio Day Marked**

Under the UNESCO auspices0, February 13 marked the eleventh World Radio Day – this year under the motto "Radio and Trust".

This year's subtopics were focused on the maintaining and raising of listeners’ trust, providing access to radio content for all listeners, including people with sensory disabilities, as well as on the challenges of ensuring economic sustainability. Building trust with the audience requires daily efforts to provide high-quality radio programme, raising of the professional journalistic standards, as well as use of new digital technologies that will make it easier to reach the listeners.

The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services congratulated all radio stations in the country on the World Radio Day and called on them to make their own contribution to the celebration of this Day.

Emphasis was also placed on the obligations arising from the revised Directive on Audiovisual Media Services. The participants in the meeting also shared Information on the activities related to the monitoring of media coverage of the elections in both countries, and the rules for PPA, gender representation in the media and the rules for protection of juvenile audience. At the end of the meeting, the participants concluded that the two authorities should continue their cooperation in the spirit of deepening mutual relations and exchanging experiences in the field of media regulation.

**AAAVMS and AMA Hold Bilateral Meeting**

Representatives of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services and the Media Regulatory Authority of the Republic of Albania (AMA) held a bilateral meeting on 2 February 2022 in Skopje.

The two regulatory bodies discussed the activities towards harmonizing domestic media-related regulation with the European one, the open issues affecting this process and how to overcome them.

**February 2022 No. 2**

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**Supervisions over Broadcasters, Operators of PECNs and Print Media**

**Broadcasters**

Regular programme supervision over the outlets’ compliance with several legal obligations – the rules for broadcasting audiovisual commercial communications, minors’ protection, use of value-added telephone services and telephone voting, broadcasting games of chance and providing quizzes or other forms of prize-winning participation, use of language in their programmes, broadcasting of at least 12 hours of television programme daily and broadcasting of at least 40% of programme originally created as Macedonian audio or audiovisual works daily – was performed over the TV channels of the Public Broadcasting Service, MRT 1, MRT 2, MRT 3, MRT 4 and MRT 5. The supervision detected no violations of the LAAVMS.

These same programme channels were subjected to regular administrative supervision regarding their obligations to publish Impressums, information that should be made available to the users, and the identification symbol of the broadcaster. The supervision detected no violations of the obligations under the LAAVMS or the Law on Media.

An ad hoc programme supervision was performed, ex officio, over SITI TV, to determine whether it had been airing at least 30% of programme originally created as Macedonian audio or audiovisual works daily, in the period from 7:00 hrs to 19:00 hrs, and over TV Due and its obligation concerning language use in its programmes. The supervision concluded that SITI TV had failed to broadcast at least half of the legal minimum of originally created programme as part of its programme aired on 10 February, while TV Due had failed to provide Albanian language translation (i.e. translation in the language in which the media outlet airs programme in accordance with its license) of parts of the cartoons "Masha and the Bear" and "Tom and Jerry" in its programme aired on 11 February 2022.

Several control programme and administrative supervisions were performed regarding various legal provisions over TV Due, TV Gurra and G-TV Televizija, in order to check if they had acted upon the decisions imposing public warning measures against them by the Agency. The supervisions showed that, on 29 January 2022, TV Gurra had failed to provide the information that it should make available to its users; on 18 February 2022, TV Due had failed to air the data it is obligated to air at an appropriate slot fo each content of the programme service, in certain parts of it aired programmes; while G-TV Televizija, TV Gurra and TV Due had all failed to broadcast at least 30% of programme originally created as Macedonian audio or audiovisual works in the period from 7:00 hrs until19:00 hrs.

Control administrative supervision was performed over the Student FM 92.9 University Radio for its obligation to publish information that should be made available to the users. The supervision showed that it had acted in full upon the public warning measure imposed against it.

**Operators of Public Electronic Communication Networks**

Regarding the obligations for registering one’s programme services with the Agency, providing subtitles for the programmes retransmitted by the operators and the latter’s obligation to ensure airing of the programme services of the public broadcaster free of charge as part of their programme packages, regular programme supervision was performed over the operators of Nafi and Beko from Gostivar, Drim Sat IPTV from Gostivar and Makedonski Telekom from Skopje. The supervision found that the operator Makedonski Telekom had been retransmitting the programme service of "ALB Music" for its customers, without it being included in the programme package registration certificates issued by the Agency.

Control programme supervision was performed over the operators of public electronic communication networks Makedonski Telekom from Skopje and Pet Net from Gevgelija, in order to check if they had acted upon the previously imposed public warning measures, issued due to retransmission of programme services that had not been registered with the Agency. The supervision showed that these operators had fully acted upon the previously imposed measures.

**Print Media**

The Agency conducted regular administrative supervision over eight print media publishers to check if they had published data such as the name and address of the print media headquarters and editorial office, data on the responsible person, editors, printing house, date of print or reprint and circulation, as required by the Law on Media. The supervision covered 10 print media outlets – Bahche, Portret, Dobra Hrana, Ruski Doktor, Shenja, Skopsko Eho, Makedonsko Eho, Zelena Berza, Lice v Lice and Instore. Based on the conducted supervision, it was concluded that the print media outlets had fulfilled their legal obligation.

Thirteen print media publishers underwent regular supervision regarding their obligation to publish Impressums. The supervision covered 13 print media outlets - Nova Makedonija, Sloboden Pechat, Vecher, Koha, Lajm, Kapital, Fokus, Ekonomija i Biznis, Porta 3, Ubavina i Zdravje, Bitolski Vesnik, Zenit and Shtipski Glas. The supervision showed that all these media outlets had met the obligation arising from the Law on Media.

**Public Warning Measures Pronounced Against Broadcasters and OPECNs**

At its 5th session held on 9 February 2022, the Agency Council adopted a Decision Imposing a Public Warning Measure against *Makedonski Telekom* from Skopje Demanding to Cease Retransmission of a Disputed TV channel, based on findings of a conducted supervision that had detected non-compliance with the obligation to register a programme service that *Makedonski Telekom* had been retransmitting to its customers.

At its 6th session held on 21 February 2022, based on supervision findings, the Agency Council made a decision to impose a public warning measure against Alfa TV from Skopje, due to violation of Article 50, Paragraph 3, of the LAAVMS, referring to the protection of juvenile audience.

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