# **Press Release**

On 1 December 2023, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services called on the media and media workers to adhere to the highest professional standards and ethical values when reporting on the case related to the missing teen girl from Skopje. In its Press Release, it pointed out that accurate and verified information must be used when publishing content, as well as credible sources, so as not to inflame the situation additionally, and not to cause fear and panic among the public.

Journalists should be particularly careful when taking over posts from the social networks, as well as from other sources whose credibility cannot be determined.

The professional responsibility of the media also implies respect for the personal pain of the family members, which is why personal and family details should be presented with utmost caution, while respecting both privacy and dignity, and without sensationalism.

**Adressing Hate Speech In the Spotlight of AVMU’s Fourth Public Meeting**



At the request of the national terrestrial television channels of Kanal 5 TV and Telma TV, a debate was opened at the meeting on addressing hate speech in the media and the online sphere. Several stakeholders in the media field shared their opinions and standpoints, and the general conclusion was that work was needed to prevent hate speech, which is present in all spheres of social life, including in the media, particularly internet portals, video sharing platforms and services such as YouTube and other platforms where content is created without editorial responsibility or filtering of the published content. All attendees agreed that the commitment to preventing such actions should continue, while the institutions should establish a system for timely response to all cases where content involving hate speech is noticed in the internet sphere.

Also shared at the meeting were the conclusions of the latest meeting of the Network for Combating Hate Speech in the Media, of which the Agency is a member. Among other things, it was agreed to sign the Network’s Memorandum at the beginning of 2024, which would operationalize the activities in the forthcoming period, in order to make use of the period before preceding the electoral process, when inflammatory speech is most often spotted in the media and the social networks. The Government’s Secretariat had announced that the activities of the Network had been included in the new Strategy covering the period 2024-2028, and that it envisaged financial resources that could be used to support the Network’s activities.

On 21 December 2023, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services held its last public meeting for this year. At the event, AVMU Director Zoran Trajchevski presented an overview of the activities carried out in accordance with the Annual Work Programme for the past three months.

Those attending had an opportunity to hear about the activities related to the supervisions conducted over radio broadcasters, operators of public electronic communication networks, print media publishers, providers of on-demand AVM services, to the imposed public warning measures and the activities in the field of international cooperation.

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**Supervisions over Broadcasters**

As regards the legal obligations concerning the publishing of an Impressum, information that should be made available to the users, broadcaster’s identification, the use of language in the programmes, the broadcasting of at least 4 hours of radio programme daily, the rules for broadcasting audio commercial communications, ensuring quizzes or other forms of prize-winning participation, the use of value-added telephone services and telephone voting, and broadcasting games of chance, regular programme and administrative supervisions were conducted over the radio stations of Marija Blagovest, Student FM, UGD FM and UKLO FM. The supervisions found no violations of the obligations arising from the LAAVMS and the Law on Media.

Control programme supervisions were carried out over TV Alsat-M, TV Sitel, TV Plus, MRT 4, MRT 3, MRT 5, Sky Radio and Sports Radio EF-EM 90.30, to establish if these broadcasters had acted upon the respective decisions to impose public warning measures against them, based on various legal provisions. The supervisions concluded that the broadcasters had acted upon the measures in full, in accordance with the LAAVMS.

Ad hoc supervisions concerning the fulfillment of the obligations under Article 62, Paragraph 6, of the LAAVMS, and Articles 9 and 21 of the Rulebook on the Minimum Technical, Spatial, Financial and Staffing Requirements for Acquiring a Radio or Television Broadcasting License, were conducted over the radio stations of Jon, Radio 99, Galaxy- 2002, Impulse, LA Costa, Zora, Eco Radio, Life, Radio 106, Goldie, Madison, Sky Radio, as well as the television stations of Shutel, Klan Macedonia, Kochani-LD, Company 21-M, Due, Kanal Festa, Kanal Vis and Sonce. The supervisions showed that these broadcasters had me the minimum staffing requirements specified in the Rulebook.

**Public Warning Measures Imposed**

At its 41st session held on 21 December 2023, the Agency Council adopted three decisions to impose public warning measures against Telma TV and Sitel TV respectively. Two measures of public warning were imposed against Telma TV – one due to failure to meet the obligation to protect minors from programmes that could harm their physical, mental or ethical development, and the second one due to failure to publish Impressum data within a documentary film. Sitel TV received a public warning measure due to airing covert audiovisual commercial communications in part of an informative and entertaining show.

At its 39th session held on 12 December 2023, based on the findings of conducted supervision indicating non-compliance with the provisions of the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, i.e. for broadcasting pop-ups/advertisements on a split screen that covered essential parts of the drama action, the Agency Council adopted a decision to issue a public warning measure against Alsat-M TV.

