[AM] Armenia adopts criteria for identifying foreign audiovisual content that interferes in Armenian domestic political life

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On 5 October 2026, the Commission on Television and Radio of the Republic of Armenia (CTR) adopted Decision No. 127-N establishing criteria for applying the prohibition of the dissemination of content that interferes in the domestic political life of the Republic of Armenia through foreign audiovisual programmes.

The decision was adopted pursuant to Article 9(6) of the Audiovisual Media Act, which authorises the CTR to establish criteria for assessing compliance with the restrictions prescribed by Article 9(5) of the Act.

Under this decision, domestic political life encompasses a broad range of relations and processes, including the formation, exercise and stability of state and local government authorities, domestic political decision-making, electoral and referendum processes, political competition, the constitutional order, democratic institutions, state sovereignty, political independence and social cohesion.

Under the newly adopted criteria, content that interferes in domestic political life is defined as audiovisual content disseminated through foreign audiovisual programmes which, by virtue of its manner of presentation, message and overall context, is aimed at exerting coercive influence on the free and independent adoption, implementation or modification of decisions relating to these matters. Such influence may involve imposing requirements or conditions, restricting freedom of decision-making or obstructing their implementation.

The decision identifies several forms of interference, including coercive influence aimed at:

• obstructing or restricting the formation, functioning or stability of state and local government authorities;

• subjecting domestic political decisions to the demands, instructions or conditions of foreign states or entities associated with them;

• interfering with the free and independent conduct of elections and referendums;

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• restricting political competition or creating preferential or disadvantageous conditions for political actors through coercive means;

• interfering with democratic institutions, state sovereignty or the independent exercise of domestic powers; or

• undermining social cohesion by provoking or deepening divisions or polarisation between different groups in society.

The decision also addresses calls to change the constitutional order outside constitutionally prescribed procedures, seize state power, interfere coercively with Armenia's independent political, economic, informational, social or cultural choices, or use or threaten force against its political independence, including the justification or encouragement of such actions.

To determine whether audiovisual content constitutes interference in domestic political life, the decision establishes six assessment criteria:

1. The subject matter of interference – whether the content concerns relations or processes falling within the scope of Armenia's domestic political life as defined by the decision.

2. The source of the content and the nature of the position expressed – whether it conveys a coercive position of a foreign state, a group of states, their authorities or persons acting under their instructions, control or support. The assessment distinguishes coercive demands, conditions, ultimatums and threats from the communication of information, expression of opinions, criticism, advice or recommendations.

3. The purpose and direction of the content – whether the content seeks to interfere with, impose conditions on, restrict or obstruct the adoption, modification or implementation of decisions concerning domestic political life.

4. The manner of presentation and the editorial and overall context – the assessment considers the language used, editing techniques, visual and audio elements, footage, headlines and subtitles. It also examines whether the content is presented in an informational, analytical or critical context, clearly distinguished from the author's or editorial team's views or accompanied by alternative viewpoints, or whether it conveys an independent message endorsing coercive interference. The overall assessment takes into account the nature, clarity and intended targets of any demands, conditions, instructions, ultimatums or threats, as well as the relevant socio-political, electoral or security context.

5. The overall message of the content – the principal idea or direction of the content communicated to the audience when the audiovisual content is considered as a whole.

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6. The format of dissemination – whether verbal, visual or technical emphasis is used to draw viewers' attention and reinforce a coercive message.

The decision specifies that these circumstances must be assessed collectively, taking into account the particular features of each case. The presence or absence of an individual circumstance is not, in itself, decisive.

Furthermore, the decision explains that the one-off dissemination of audiovisual content or the absence of actual consequences does not, in itself, exclude its classification as interference in domestic political life, provided that the content meets the established definition and at least one of the specified criteria concerning forms of interference is present.

The decision entered into force on 10 October 2026.

Հեռուստատեսության և ռադիոյի հանձնաժողովի որոշումը օտարերկրյա տեսալսողական ծրագրերում ՀՀ ներքաղաքական կյանքին միջամտության բովանդակության տարածման չարաշահման արգելքի չափորոշիչները սահմանելու մասին

https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/231938/latest

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