[RO] Guidelines on Correct Public Information

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In Decision no. 274 of 25 September 2003, the Consiliul NaTional al Audiovizualului (the supervisory body for electronic media in Romania - CNA) set out a series of guidelines on the correct handling and dissemination of information aimed at the public. The principles that broadcasters in Romania will have to follow include the obligations:

- to promote the free formation of opinion;

- to provide balanced reporting by offering different, contrasting points of view;

- to distinguish clearly between opinion and objective reporting of facts;

- to avoid all forms of discrimination on grounds of race, religion, nationality, gender, sexual orientation or ethnic origin.

In order to ensure public information is as accurate as possible, broadcasters are advised to edit their information very thoroughly, carefully checking the sources and balance of reports and giving details of sources. In particular in the case of natural disasters or states of emergency, the CNA recommends that the electronic media carefully check the information gathered from their own sources and compare it with official statements. If there are any discrepancies, the information released by official legal sources, with precise details of those sources, should be broadcast alongside the provider's own information. If possible, broadcasters should avoid spreading panic among the people by giving out unverified information. As far as official statements regarding natural disasters and states of emergency are concerned, these should be broadcast in full and as a priority.

Other guidelines suggest that the names of accident victims should not be divulged until they have been officially confirmed, that shocking pictures should not be shown repetitively and that there should be no speculation in connection with such events.

The individual broadcaster's logo should appear on the screen at all times except during advertisements. In addition, the world "live" should appear during live broadcasts; the word "repeat" should appear during programmes, including news bulletins, which are repeated. In order to avoid confusion, the use of old footage should be denoted by the words "archive pictures".

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Breaches of the rules set out in the CNA decision will be subject to fines in accordance with Article 91 of the Legea audiovizualului (Romanian Audiovisual Act Nr. 504/2002) or public censure in the sense of Decision no. 52/2003.

Decizia CNA nr. 274 din 25 septembrie 2003 privind asigurarea informarii corecte a opiniei publice, Monitorul Oficial al României No. 699, 06/10/2003

CNA decision no. 274 of 25 September 2003, Monitorul Oficial al României No. 699 of 6 October 2003

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