[RO] CNA Decision on Information and Plurality

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Basing itself on the conviction that freedom of opinion and the guarantee of unlimited access to information of public interest constitute important bases for a democratic society and that exercising the right to freely express an opinion has as prerequisites duties and responsibilities, the Romanian Consiliul National al Audiovizualului (supervisory body for electronic media - CNA)has introduced new rules for guaranteeing accurate information and protecting plurality in Romanian broadcasting channels.

During news broadcasts on matters of public interest the following principles must be respected a) unbiased, balanced reporting promoting freedom of opinion; b) a clear division between facts and opinions and c) the avoidance of any form of discrimination.

These criteria must also then be respected when experts, journalists, representatives of non-parliamentary parties, representatives of minorities, non-governmental organisations, trade-unions or employers are being questioned or quoted. Basically, various viewpoints on an issue are to be expressed during a programme. Should the people addressed refuse to give their opinion, then the journalist must report this refusal.

Broadcasters may not transmit audio-visual programmes which are influenced or moderated by politically active people. Moreover they must respect the `rule of three”: a third of broadcasting time, set aside for the political events of the day, must be granted to the parliamentary opposition, one third is to be allocated to the representatives of the central public administration (Prime Minister, Ministers) and a final third goes to the parties forming the parliamentary majority.

What is more, for informative programmes rigour in reporting, harmony of commentary, shots and titles and exact acknowledgements for imported contributions are stipulated.

The broadcasting institutes are obliged to display their logo throughout the programme on the television screen with the exception of advertisements.

Breaching the aforementioned provisions is sanctioned by fines under article 91 of the Audiovisual Law n° 504/2002.

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Moreover appropriate regulations for the publication of opinion polls, reporting on minorities and the presentation of catastrophes were drawn up.

With the publication of CNA decision N° 519 on 27 September 2005, decision N° 40/2004 on the guarantee of accurate information and the preservation of plurality (Official Journal of Romania N° 234 of 17 March 2004) ceased to be in force.

Decizia nr. 519 din 27/09/2005 privind asigurarea informării corecte şi a pluralismului, Monitorul Oficial al României, Partea I nr. 888 din 04.10.2005

CNA decision N° 519 of 27 September 2005, Monitorul Oficial al României, Partea I nr. 888 of 4 October 2005

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