[TR] Classification System in Turkish Televisions

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The Turkish Radio-Television Authority, RTÜK, initiated an "Intelligent Signs" (*Akıllı İşaretler*) system to protect children against the harmful effects of TV broadcasting in Turkey. A pursuant directive shall be designed after a certain test stage.

The aim of RTÜK is to develop a sign system "to protect children and youth against harmful media content which may contain bad language; stimulate smoking, alcohol and gambling; suicide; or negative behaviour".

The system is based on seven symbols: Four of them show the suitability of programmes according to different age groups (7+, 13+, 18+, or general audience) and three symbols describe certain types of harmful content (violence/horror, sex or negative behaviour). An evaluated television programme may contain symbols from both categories. The signs were determined by Commissions which work under the umbrella of RTÜK. Members of these Commissions were experts and scholars from university departments such as communication, psychology, and children's mental health.

As a consequence of the classification of programmes, those with a 13+ symbol shall be broadcast after 21.30 hours, those with an 18+ symbol after 23.00 hours.

Except in the case of news programmes, these symbols shall be shown for 5 seconds on full screen at the beginning of programmes.

Coders, who are graduates employed by the media institutions, decide on the application of these symbols after filling in a form designed by RTÜK. However, RTÜK, which provided training programmes to coders, controls the application and may make adjustments. In practice, for the filing an online-form is used available at the RTÜK's website giving access by pin numbers.

The approach of the system is contentious. Firstly, some question the objectivity of coders. Others complain that the broadcasters have to transfer their prime time programmes to a slot after 23.00 hours because of the classification system.

The actual policy will be determined after a negotiation process between broadcasters and RTÜK.

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