[SI] Discussion on the Implementation of Programme Standards

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At the end of 2006 the mechanisms for the implementation of programme standards were put to the test.

On 28 November 2006 in a television show broadcast by the public service broadcaster RTV Slovenija (Radio-Television Slovenia) a Member of Parliament, the leader of the Slovenian National Party, was confronted by the representative of the Roma community, a member of the City Council of Novo Mesto. The former, making an offensive and denigrating speech against the latter, did not refrain from his behaviour despite having constantly been asked for restraint by the host entertainer.

Both the relevant act and RTV's internal rules contain stipulations on content obligations as well as on related responsibilities of the broadcaster's employees. Articles 4, 5, 10 and 22 of the Act on the Radio-Television Slovenia (*Zakon o Radioteleviziji Slovenija*) provide that the responsibilities of the employees (journalists, editors and the Director General) are related to the programme content which should comply with democratic values; the incitement hatred of racial and cultural minorities is prohibited as well as political “propaganda” (the latter being allowed only under certain conditions during pre-election campaigns).

Articles 11, 42, 50 and 62 of the Statute of the Public Radio-television Slovenia (*statut javnega zavoda radiotelevizije slovenija*) foresee that the basic (democratic) principles of publicity, plurality and (political) independence should be respected. The responsibility for the stated principles is delegated to the Director General, the Director of Television, the Director of Radio and the editors in chief.

As a consequence of the broadcast, five members of the Programme Council of Television Slovenia convened an immediate extraordinary session to discuss the case and to request the Director General to take measures against the responsible persons among the staff, including the Director of the public service television channel and the editor of the respective programme unit. They referred to the legislative (Act on the Radio-Television Slovenia) and statutory tools (Statute of the public service broadcaster, Radio-Television Slovenia) as well as to

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indications from public opinion that revealed that a scandal was expected. The Programme Council stated in its decision that the incident violated the programme standards, although no consensus was reached with reference to the violation of the statute, and to issue, in the Council's decision, sanctions against responsible persons.

At the same time the television executives took measures to avoid a repetition of the incident in future.

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