[RO] Portrayal of the Referendum in the Electronic Media

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For the first time in the history of Romania, on 19 May 2007, a referendum was held on the question of deposing the President. Immediately after the Romanian parliament's decision of 19 April 2007 to suspend the country's President, the *Consiliul Naţional al Audiovizualului* (National Audiovisual Council - CNA) expressed in a press release (*Comunicat de presă al CNA din 20 aprilie 2007*) its concerns about the way in which the political events associated with this suspension were being portrayed on radio and television . It stated that incorrect information and erroneous views on the constitutional and electoral system, as well as on the powers of fundamental state institutions, had been disseminated and that this "could have led to additional tensions given the current political crisis". It went on to state that "acting responsibly is not only the task of the political class but also a duty of journalists and all those who express their opinion on radio and television".

In order to ensure that the campaign in preparation for the referendum would be properly reported in the electronic media, the CNA issued its Decision No. 369 (*Decizia Nr. 369 pentru reflectarea pe posturile de radio şi de televiziune a referendumului privind demiterea Preşedintelui României*) on 23 April 2007 . In this, the CNA made it clear that radio and television programme organisers must comply in their reporting with the rules on correct and balanced information and observe the principle of diversity of opinion. Opinions on both sides should be given equal coverage in both the debates and the discussion programmes on the subject of the referendum. The broadcasters were also forbidden to ask the public for their opinion on the subject by text message, e-mail or telephone until after the referendum had been held. Audience surveys concerning the referendum should on no account be shown to be "representative" of a particular social or ethnic group. Moreover, the broadcasters should present the existing diversity of opinion in their programming. For the entire duration of the campaign, it was not permitted to broadcast any commercials with the aim of highlighting, either positively or negatively, a particular party, politician or political message.

On 4 May 2007, the CNA also announced in a press release that this was not an election campaign and that broadcasters were not only prohibited from broadcasting advertising with political content, but also from selling broadcasting time (*Comunicat de presă al CNA din 4 mai 2007 referitor la regulile ce trebuie respectate în timpul campaniei pentru referendum*).

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Comunicat de presă CNA din 20 aprilie 2007

http://www.cna.ro/comunicare/comunic/2007/c0420.html

CNA press release of 20 April 2007

Decizia Nr. 369 din 23 aprilie 2007 pentru reflectarea pe posturile de radio şi de televiziune a referendumului privind demiterea preşedintelui României

http://www.cna.ro/reglementari/decizii/d36907.html

CNA decision of 23 April 2007

Comunicat de presă CNA din 4 mai 2007 referitor la regulile ce trebuie respectate în timpul campaniei pentru referendum

http://www.cna.ro/comunicre/comunic/2007/c0504_1.html

CNA press release of 4 May 2007

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