[RO] Reporting on the Heat Wave and Climate Change

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The incessant drought and heat wave that hit Romania in the Summer of 2007 provided the *Consiliul Naţional al Audiovizualului* (Romania's audiovisual watchdog - CNA) with an opportunity to assess how broadcasters reported on the difficult weather conditions, the extraordinary heat, the lengthy period of drought, the isolated violent storms and other negative effects of climate change. The CNA found that most broadcasters "unfortunately could not resist the temptation in their news bulletins to exaggerate the seriousness of the situation and the extent of the negative impact of the climate on the health of citizens and their property".

A recommendation on this subject, addressed to the electronic media in Romania on 18 July 2007, criticises the tendency to "report on disasters and sensations and the inclination to exaggerate" demonstrated by many audiovisual media outlets and makes a "public appeal to all broadcasters" to adhere to the legal and ethical obligations laid down in the *Legea audiovizualului* (Audiovisual Act) and the *Codul de reglementare a conţinutului audiovizual* (CNA regulatory code for audiovisual content).

The recommendation aims to ensure that the population is correctly informed about any dangers posed by unusual weather conditions or accidents that might have negative socio-economic effects or might damage the environment. Citizens should be informed objectively about any measures taken to prevent or combat the social, economic or ecological consequences of such natural phenomena or accidents. Before broadcasting reports that might create panic amongst the population, broadcasters should compare the information acquired from their own or other sources with the reports from the relevant authorities; if there are significant discrepancies between the two, broadcasters are obliged by law to also publicise the information given out by official sources.

Finally, the recommendation of 18 July explains that "the audiovisual watchdog, the CNA , will continue in future to monitor very closely the compliance of broadcasters with their obligations in this area and, where necessary, will take punitive measures" if infringements are committed.

Recomandarea CNA din 18 iulie 2007

http://www.cna.ro/comunicare/comunic/2007/c0718.html

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CNA recommendation of 18 July 2007

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