[CY] Regulations on Fairness Amended to Cover EU Parliament Elections

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Following an amendment to the legal framework the elections for the members of the EU Parliament were included on the list of contests that should receive fair coverage by the media. The Normative Administrative Act KDP.207/2009 amended certain provisions of the Regulations on Fair Treatment of Parties and Candidates (KDP.193/2006) so that contestants in EU Parliament elections are treated fairly as in the case of Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Authorities elections.

The Regulations on Fair Treatment of Parties and Candidates were issued in conformity with the Law on Radio and Television Stations (N.7(I)1998), which was amended earlier in the same manner. They define fairness and set the terms and conditions under which it is achieved. Fairness in the coverage of elections by broadcasters is based on proportionality, a party's presence in parliament and overall organisation. The main provisions of the Regulations are as follows:

- The coverage should promote pluralism and impartiality and ensure both freedom of expression and editorial independence.

- Fairness should apply with respect to the number and kind of party activities covered. The criteria used are the duration of on-screen presence and coverage of overall activity, as well as of reports on the activities of parties and candidates; access and coverage offered to supporters is also taken into account.

- Activities of holders of public office are credited to parties or candidates when they are considered as electioneering, i.e., offering support or promoting a candidate or a party or giving an account of accomplishments.

- Media policies of addressing invitations and offering access to programmes should also respect fairness and be done without discrimination. The same principles must also apply in the case of men and women invitees and candidates contesting seats in the same constituency.

- In fulfillment of these obligations broadcasters are obliged to draft a code of conduct and draw up their schedule of programmes 30 days before the electoral period, which is set at 40 days from the polling day. The drafting work is to be done in co-operation with political parties or candidates, without prejudice to

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editorial independence.

In the absence of any statutory definition of a “political party”, the Regulations define a party in the same way as the amending law 212/1987 to the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation, the public service broadcaster; thus, “party” means a party represented in the House of Representatives or an association or group of persons, which in the understanding of the average sensible citizen having knowledge of the internal political reality in the Republic and considering its organisation, structure, institutional setting, its goals and appeal, is considered as a party.

Ο περί Ραδιοφωνικών και Τηλεοπτικών Σταθμών Νόμος του 1998, ΚΔΠ 207/2009, Επίσημη Εφημερίδα, 15/05/2009

Law on Radio and Television Stations of 1998, Normative Administrative Act KDP.207/2009, Official Gazette, 15 May 2009

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