[GR] Guidelines for the Appropriate Coverage by Radio and Television of the Pre-Election Period for the Parliamentary Elections

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In September 2009, the *Ethniko Symvoulio Radiotileorasis* (National Council for Radio and Television - ESR) issued a Directive that provides guidelines concerning the coverage by radio and television of the period prior to the Greek national parliamentary elections of 4 October 2009.

The Directive was published several months after the publication of another Directive by the Council that dealt with the coverage of the period prior to the elections for the Greek members for the European Parliament. The two Directives contain many comparable provisions, however September's Directive is more detailed and includes three articles that did not exist in the previous Directive.

Both Directives present clarifications as to how the ministerial decisions relating to the coverage of the pre-election periods should be applied and upheld by the ESR. They provide similar general rules for the appropriate broadcast by radio and television stations of shows of political interest. They emphasize, among other things, the principal of 'analogical equality', which should be taken into account for the lawful broadcast of shows covering the elections. The more recent of the two Directives explains that the correct interpretation of the principle of "analogical equality" is construed on the basis of the number of votes that the parties received in the previous elections.

Furthermore, both Directives indicate guidelines concerning public opinion polls, other types of research on public opinion and the obligation to report to the ESR the transmission of special shows whose subject matter is related to the pre-election period.

One main difference between the two Directives is that the Directive of September provides details concerning the presentation of individual parliamentary candidates on radio or television shows, in particular regarding the frequency of their appearance. Additionally, this Directive clarifies the obligations of radio and television stations to inform the political parties and the candidates about the time and the manner of presenting political discussions or stories regarding their political activity during the pre-election period. In contrast, the earlier Directive does not contain any similar provisions.

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Finally, even though both Directives include provisions concerning political advertisements, the more recent one has an Article specifically dedicated to the explanation of what constitutes a permissible political advertisement and the timeframe of its broadcast, whereas the older Directive incorporates provisions related to advertisements in the Article dealing with general rules.

Οδηγία Αριθμ. 3/15.09.2009 του Εθνικού Συμβουλίου Ραδιοτηλεόρασης

http://www.esr.gr/

Directive No. 3/15.09.2009 of the National Council for Radio and Television

Οδηγία Αριθμ. 2/19.05.2009 του Εθνικού Συμβουλίου Ραδιοτηλεόρασης

http://www.esr.gr/

Directive No. 2/19.05.2009 of the National Council for Radio and Television

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Decisions of the Minister for Internal Affairs No. 21167/9.9.2009, 21168/9.9.2009, 12217/13.5.2009 and 12512/15.5.2009

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