[BA] RAK issues warning to FTV

IRIS 2010-5:1/7

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A very specific case recently prompted a reaction from the Communications Regulatory Agency (RAK) concerning the sensitive issue of judging broadcast programme content.

The political magazine “60 minutes” of the Federal Television (FTV), a public broadcaster, in its issue broadcast on 8 February 2010, borrowed from YouTube inserts from the movie “Der Untergang” (“Downfall”). The story is about Hitler and his closest associates in his Berlin bunker, shortly before Berlin’s final downfall.

The video clip was named “Vidimo se u Bileci” (“See you in Bileca”) and makes an allusion to an election debacle of the Party of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), which is the ruling political party in Republika Srpska (RS), in Bileca, a small town located in south-east part of the RS bordering with Montenegro.

In this video clip the prime minister of RS and head of the SNSD was depicted as Hitler and his closest associates were acting as leading Nazis of that time. Such a role was clearly suggested by accompanying titles/captions.

The reactions of the RS were vehement. To compare leading politicians of the RS with Nazis was considered in bad taste, in particular if seen in the context of not so distant history - the Second World War -- in which Serbs suffered badly at the hands of the Nazis.

The Communications Regulatory Agency stated in its warning that “With full respect for the freedom of editorial policy and independent journalism, as well as for satire as a specific form of expression, the Agency considers that broadcast of this form of contents within the informative programmes seriously endangers professional and ethical standards that should be implemented by public broadcasting services, as well as the function of the public broadcasting service itself.”

According to the RAK's press release the Agency was surprised due to the silence of the Steering Board, the Editorial Council and the Management of RTV FBiH who are responsible for the creation of editorial policy and their failure to react.

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RAK's warning

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