[HU] Recommendation on the Classification of Programmes Issued by the Media Council

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On 19 July 2011 a Recommendation on aspects necessary for the classification of programmes and on the displaying of symbols corresponding to the classification of programmes was issued by the Media Council of the National Media and Communications Authority (hereinafter referred to as “Media Council”). The Recommendation is aimed at ensuring the protection of minors from harmful media content. This Recommendation was issued after a public hearing held on 11 July 2011 with the participation of media service providers, distributors and lobby organizations of the Hungarian media market.

The Recommendation completes the provisions for protection of minors of the new Hungarian Media Act that came into force on 1 January 2011. It defines the content of the different classification categories included in the Hungarian Media Act, which are based on the age of the possible audience. It also defines in a more detailed fashion the displaying of symbols in relation to the specific classification categories. The purpose of the Recommendation was not to set strict and rigid regulations for the classification but rather to give the media service providers information and guidance on the classification of programmes. In Hungary the rating of programmes based on the age of the intended audience and the displaying of the proper symbol concerning the specific category is also the obligation of the media service providers. The Recommendation is not legally binding; however, due to the fact that the Media Council is authorised by the new Hungarian Media Act to issue such recommendations, the provisions of the recommendations are applicable and can be referred to in individual cases and decisions.

According to the new Media Act, the Hungarian classification system currently consists of six classification categories: from Category I (programmes that may be viewed or listened to by persons of any age and can be aired at any time) up to Category VI, (programmes that may seriously impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors, particularly because they involve pornography or extreme and/or unnecessary scenes of violence and therefore can be aired only in an encrypted form or by the use of another effective technical solution). The Recommendation describes the psychological characteristics and the media competence of the different age groups in relation to the classification categories that have been set out in the Media Law Act. Furthermore, it illustrates by several

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examples which genres, harmful elements or problem areas can appear in each specific category and which content shall be classified as falling into a higher (stricter) category.

According to the Media Act, in linear media services the rating of the programme shall be communicated at the beginning of the broadcasting of the programme. The Recommendation defines this labeling requirement more precisely: it stipulates among others that in the case of television programmes the rating shall be published both visually and verbally, as well as providing that the informative screen text shall be legible, be singled out from the background and shall cover a minimum of 50% of the screen.

Furthermore, in linear audiovisual media services, at the time the programme is aired, a symbol corresponding to the classification of the programme shall also be displayed in the form of a pictogram in one corner of the screen so that it is clearly visible throughout the entire course of the programme. The Recommendation determines in detail to what extent, in which coordinates and in which corner of the screen the pictogram shall be placed. Although the Media Act does not contain any provision for distinguishing which programmes could be especially recommended to children by a special pictogram, the Recommendation emphasises, that besides the protection of minors from harmful media content the media organisation shall also endeavour to convey constructive information to specific age groups. Therefore, the media service providers are entitled to indicate programmes classified as the Category I and made expressly for children under 6 years of age by a special, so-called, “child-friendly” pictogram. The media service providers can thereby help parents and educationalists to choose suitable programmes for children. To this effect, the Media Council organised an Internet poll whereby television viewers could vote on which pictogram would be assigned to the “child-friendly” programmes. More than ten thousand people voted for a pictogram that figured a little boy.

A Nemzeti Média- és Hírközlési Hatóság Médiatanácsának ajánlása a médiatartalmak korhatár-besorolásánál irányadó szempontokra, az egyes műsorszámok közzététele előtt és közben alkalmazható jelzésekre, illetve a minősítés közlésének módjára vonatkozó jogalkalmazási gyakorlat elvi szempontjairól, 2011. július 19.

http://www.mediatanacs.hu/uploads/9/11/1311163478klasszifikacios_ajanlas_2011-07-19.pdf

Recommendation by the Media Council of the National Media and Communications Authority on the most important conceptual aspects of the enforcement practice concerning the criteria governing the classification of media content, the symbols to be used prior to and in the course of broadcasting the various programmes and the method of communicating the classification, 19 July

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