[RO] Recommendation on Roşia Montană Case Coverage

IRIS 2011-10:1/37

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The Consiliul Naţional al Audiovizualului (National Council for Electronic Media - CNA) issued on 27 September 2011 a recommendation to radio and television broadcasters on how to deal with the media coverage of a very sensitive politico-economic long-run case: the Roşia Montană project.

The lack of impartiality in the coverage of the topic by Romanian media already induced the Council to issue several sanctions, including public warnings issued on 22 September 2011 on the main domestic channel of the public radio broadcaster, Radio România Actualităţi, and the private television station, The Money Channel.

The Council found that several broadcasters had breached the rules of observing the principles of impartiality and equality and to support freedom of opinion. The CNA considered Art. 40 (1) and (2) along with Arts. 66 (1) and (2) and 67 of the Codul audiovizualului (Audiovisual Code) were infringed by the broadcasters (see inter alia IRIS 2011-7/39, 2011-5/38 and 2008-1/25).

Art. 40 (1) states that accusations during audiovisual programmes have to be proven and that the accused persons shall have the opportunity to express their opinion on the subject; if the accusations are made by the broadcaster, it has to observe the principle audiatur et altera pars and to announce if the accused person refuses to present his or her point of view. Art. 40 (2) provides that moderators are obliged to strongly request interlocutors to provide evidence for accusations or at least to produce the proof they have, in order to allow the public to evaluate to what extent the allegations are justified.

Art. 66 (1) refers to impartiality, equality and the right to freedom of opinion, by airing the main opposing points of view during the public debate on a certain issue, and forbids any forms of discrimination. Art. 66 (2) requests media to present the conflicting points of view during the same broadcast, and only exceptionally in the next show; in any case, if one party refuses to express his or her opinion, the moderator has to announce on air this refusal and to find other ways to ensure impartiality of treatment in the programme.

Art. 67 states the obligation for presenters and moderators to observe impartiality and to clearly separate opinions from facts.

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Due to the complexity of the Roşia Montană case and its potential impact on the environment, the Council recommended the media to host and broadcast only qualified opinions (from experts, specialists, etc.), in order to help the public to understand the topic under debate.

The project, promoted by a Canadian company, is very much contested by some Romanian political forces and ecologists and dates back to the 1990s. Its aim is to extract gold by means of the cyanides techniques , which are allegedly very dangerous and hazardous to the environment, in an area in the central part of Romania that has been known for its gold mines since Roman times.

Recomandare CNA din 27.09.2011

http://www.cna.ro/Recomandare,4508.html

CNA Recommendation of 27 September 2011

Decizia nr. 549 din 22.09.2011 privind somarea Societăţii Române de Radiodifuziune

http://www.cna.ro/Decizia-nr-549-din-22-09-2011.html

Decision no. 549 of 22 September 2011 with regard to the public warning to the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Corporation

Decizia nr. 551 din 22.09.2011 privind somarea S.C Realitatea Media S.A.

http://www.cna.ro/DECIZIA-nr-551-din-22-09-2011.html

Decision no. 551 of 22 September 2011 with regard to the public warning to S.C. Realitatea Media S.A.

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