[RO] Recommendation for the Coverage of Social Protests

IRIS 2012-3:1/31

Eugen Cojocariu
Radio Romania International

The Consiliul Naţional al Audiovizualului (National Council for Electronic Media - CNA) issued on 17 January 2012 a recommendation addressed to audiovisual broadcasters to inform correctly and in full about the important social protests that started in Romania in mid-January.

The Council requested the broadcasters to observe the Legea audiovizualului nr. 504/2002, cu modificările şi completările ulterioare (Audiovisual Act no. 504/2002, with further modifications and completions) and the Codul Audiovizualului - Decizia nr. 220/2011 privind Codul de reglementare a conţinutului audiovizual, cu modificările şi completările ulterioare (Audiovisual Code, Decision no. 220/2011 concerning the regulation of audiovisual content, with further modifications and completions; see IRIS 2008-1/26 and IRIS 2011-10/37).

Due to the fact that television remains the main information source for 80% of the population and in the context of the numerous social protests reported about live or pre-recorded by most television stations, the Council reminded that, according to Art. 3 (2) of the Audiovisual Act, television and radio stations are obliged to inform the public objectively by a fair presentation of facts and events and to favour free opinion-making. Broadcasters are obliged not to air distorted or unchecked information and to make due corrections immediately, if significant errors have occurred.

The Council requested broadcasters to clearly mark replayed images with their initial date or the sign “Archive”, in order to avoid confusion. The CNA also requested broadcasters to avoid repeated and unjustified replay of violent, obscene or instigating messages and reminded them that journalists must observe the rights of every member of society of pluralism and free opinion-making. The Council also requested the Gendarmerie and the protesters to allow journalists to do their job in the safest possible way.

The recommendation came after several days of extended and sometimes violent social protest which started mid-January in Bucharest and many other Romanian cities. The protesters called for the resignation of Romania’s President and for early parliamentary elections. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister resigned on 6 February 2012. The protesters accused the President and the Government of wrong anti-crisis measures and of authoritarian and non-democratic acts. Violent

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clashes took place in Bucharest during the first stage of protests between the Gendarmerie and protesters, presumably fans of some football teams. The President and the ruling coalition accused the opposition of being behind the protests, but the opposition firmly rejected these allegations. The President and the ruling majority also accused the main Romanian news television stations of unfair and biased coverage of the protests.

Recomandare CNA 17 ianuarie 2012

http://www.cna.ro/Recomandare,4751.html

CNA Recommendation of 17 January 2012

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