[MK] Media Regulatory Authority adopts Guideline on Protection of Media Pluralism

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The Macedonian media regulation authority, the Broadcasting Council, adopted a Прирачник за оценување на медиумскиот плурализам (Guideline for assessing media pluralism), whose aim is to provide the Council with the tools required to adjust its decision-making process in order to foster media pluralism in the country. This document comes in response to the remark in the EU Commission's Progress Report for 2012 where the Commission expressed "[...] widespread concerns about lack of pluralism and self-censorship [...]". Moreover, the EU Commission points out that the intense governmental advertising activity has a strong impact on editorial policy: "There continues to be concern that a large proportion of government-funded advertising campaigns is being directed to media supportive of the government."

The Guideline is a 10-page document, which sums up the provisions of the Закон за радиодифузната дејност (Broadcasting Activity Law from 2005) having Ofcom's paper "Measuring Media Plurality: Ofcom's advice to the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport" as a starting point. The Guideline adapts the Ofcom's paper to the Macedonian media legal framework and defines the areas that will be taken into consideration when media pluralism is assessed:

1) Indicators for assessment of basic preconditions: the indicators in this part assess to what extent the legal environment creates conditions for fostering media pluralism and media freedom. 2) Indicators for assessment of pluralism of media types and genres: this part lists the indicators for assessing media genres, used by the broadcasters, as well as the regulatory guarantees, which ensure the independent allocation of funding for the public broadcasting service. 3) Indicators for assessment of political pluralism: these indicators measure if there is a proportionate presence of different political options, if the right for correction and reply is guaranteed, how the legal provisions on political advertising during elections are implemented etc. 4) Indicators for assessment of cultural pluralism: these indicators measure to what extent the provisions on European audiovisual works are put into practice, whether national minorities have TV and radio channels in their native languages and to what extent representatives from marginalized groups are employed in the electronic media, especially in the public broadcasting service. 5) Indicators for assessment of geographical pluralism: in this part the Guideline measures to what extent local and regional content is

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produced and the penetration rate of other delivery platforms in the geographical regions.

In regard to the issue of fostering pluralism and media freedom, the EU Commission in the 2012 Progress Report also suggested that the Broadcasting Council should improve its policy on granting and revoking licenses: “the Broadcasting Council also revoked the license of the television channel A2 TV on the grounds that the programming content was not in line with the license requirements. The Broadcasting Council needs to demonstrate that it is following a non-discriminatory and transparent approach”.

Прирачник за оценување на медиумскиот плурализам

http://www.srd.org.mk/images/Priracnik%201_Pluralizam%20finalna.doc

Guideline for assessing the media pluralism, December 2012

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2012 Progress Report, SWD(2012) 332 final, 10 October 2012

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/mk_rapport_2012_en.pdf

„Measuring Media Plurality: Ofcom’s advice to the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport”, June 2012

http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/consultations/measuring-plurality/statement/statement.pdf

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