[MD] Broadcaster fined for airing Russian programme

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On the basis of the recently adopted amendments to Moldova's Audiovisual Code (see IRIS 2006-9/27), which were signed into law by the President of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova on 10 January 2018, the national media regulatory authority, the Council for Coordination of the Audiovisual Sector (CCA) (see IRIS 2015-5/24), imposed on a national television network a fine roughly amounting EUR 3 500 (MDL 70 000).

The 2018 amendments allowed broadcasters and cable operators to disseminate television and radio programming containing information about current, military and political affairs that was produced in the EU countries, the US or Canada, as well as in other countries that have ratified the European Convention on Transfrontier Television. However, it also introduced steep fines for violations of the above provision; this made the amendments somewhat confusing, as they introduced penalties for violations of the provisions allowing certain actions.

The CCA unanimously decided to impose a fine of MDL 70 000 on General Media Group Corp. Ltd., the founder of the Prime television network, for a live rebroadcast, on 1 March 2018, of the annual address of the Russian President Vladimir Putin to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.

At the CCA hearings on 5 April 2018, the broadcaster claimed that the programme had not fallen under any of the categories defined by law. It also said that the live broadcast was neither unforeseen in the listings, nor initiated by Prime, whereas its editorial content could not be anticipated by the re-broadcaster. It assured the CCA that it would do its utmost to ensure that "such problems do not arise in the future".

Cu privire la examinarea sesizării Asociației Obștești Comunitatea pentru advocacy și politici publice „WatchDog.md", f/nr. din 12.03.2018

http://cca.md/files/D.%209-53%20din%2005.04.2018%20-%20Cu%20privire%20la%20examinarea%20sesizarii%20Asocia%C8%9Biei%20Obstesti%20Comunitatea%20pentru%20advocacy%20si%20politici%20publice%20WatchDog1.pdf

Decision N 9/53, 5 April 2018, of the Council for Coordination on Audiovisual "Upon the complaint of the Public Association Community for Advocacy and public

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policy ‘WatchDog.md’, issued on 12 March 2018”

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