[MT] Paid advertisements broadcast on nationwide radio stations for the European parliamentary elections

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On 25 January 2019, the Broadcasting Authority issued a new directive to radio broadcasters which is totally innovative in so far as it allows - for the very first time in Maltese broadcasting history - paid electoral advertisements on nationwide radio stations. However, the advertisements allowed are restricted to the announcement of information meetings to be held by prospective electoral candidates not to serve as “propaganda” for these candidates.

The directive allows national radio stations to provide airtime to Maltese candidates standing for election to the European Parliament. National radio stations have been authorised to receive requests for paid advertising from European parliamentary election candidates in respect of meetings organised for the purposes of disseminating information.

Such advertisements must comply with the following requirements:

- The advertisements may only deal with information meetings organised by candidates. The advertising has to be candidate-oriented and not originated by the respective political parties.

- No advertisement may last longer than 30 seconds.

- The radio station broadcasting such an advertisement has to broadcast it within two particular transmission time bands. These have been set at between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. and between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m.

- Each candidate is allowed one advertisement per hour during the two hours allotted to this scheme - that is to say, no more than two advertisements per day may be broadcast per electoral candidate.

- Each radio station is obliged to establish a fair and transparent procedure regarding the order of broadcast of such advertisements.

- In the event that the scheme is renewed until the EU Parliamentary elections, such advertising has to cease at midnight on Thursday 23 May.

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- The station’s editorial policy cannot be used as a basis for discrimination between one candidate and another.

- Any exclusion of an advertisement from being broadcast should be reasonably justified.

- All other broadcasting legislation continues to apply during the transitional period, in conjunction with this scheme.

This scheme began on 1st February 2019 and ended on 28th February 2019. The Authority will consider renewing the scheme. In order to evaluate the situation in time, and should the scheme continue, in order to avoid interruptions, the radio stations had to communicate the amount of such advertising by not later than 23 February 2019. If the scheme works well, with everyone’s cooperation, then the regulator would consider renewing it for the coming months.

Direttiva. Elezzjoni Parlament Ewropew. Xandir ta’ Reklamar bi Ħlas fuq l-Istazzjonijiet tar-Radju Nazzjonali

http://www.ba-malta.org/file.aspx?f=387

Directive. European parliamentary elections. Broadcast of Paid Advertisements on Nationwide Radio Stations

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