

[MD] Audiovisual Code amended

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On 16 December 2020, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted at the final reading several amendments to the 2018 Code of the Republic of Moldova on Audiovisual Media Services. The amendments were introduced on 23 November 2020. They were signed by the outgoing President of Moldova Igor Dodon on 18 December and entered into force on 22 December 2020.

The amendments, in particular, rephrase paragraph 4 of the Code's Article 17 (see IRIS 2019-3:1/24). It now says: "In order to protect the national audiovisual space and ensure national security, providers and distributors of media services have the right to include in their service offerings the broadcast of television and radio broadcasting programmes of a military nature, domestic or purchased in third countries, which comply with the provisions of the Concept and the Strategy of Information Security of the Republic of Moldova." Law No. 299/2017 on the Concept was adopted by Parliament in 2017 and serves as the basis for strategies with five-year programmes, currently covering the period 2019-24.

The amendments abolished the minimum quota of 50% for audiovisual products from the EU member states and countries who ratified the European Convention on Transfrontier Television of the Council of Europe, in respect of all programmes purchased by Moldovan broadcasters. In addition, the quotas of 50% for European audiovisual products and 10% for independent production for Moldovan linear broadcasters were abolished. The amendments also abolished the 30% quota for European products that existed for non-linear media (Articles 5 and 6 of the Code). Thus, the new law has removed the obstacles for the Russian TV news and public affairs programmes that have existed for the past two years. The amendments also abolished the existing ban (Article 53) for the public authorities, including parliament, government and municipal authorities, to be the owners or beneficiaries of audiovisual media service providers. The ban shall still remain for political parties, "religious cults" and trade unions.

Law on amendments to the Code of the Republic of Moldova on Audiovisual Media Services N 174/2018

