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**EXTRACT FROM THE EXPERT JUDGMENT
OF MEDIA ETHICS OBSERVATORY
ON THE COMPLAINT OF SHAHEN KHACHATRIAN,
DIRECTOR OF “KANKOR” MEDICAL CENTER,
REGARDING SOME STORIES OF “HORIZON” NEWS PROGRAM
OF “SHANT” TV COMPANY**

The subject of Shahen Khachatrian’s complaint were the TV reports, aired on “Horizon” news program on October 3, 4, 2012, and on “Sunday Horizon”, October 7, 2012. The stories told about the patient, who was transferred to “Kankor” and passed away later, as well as about the conflict on this matter between the deceased’s relatives and the doctors. Shahen Khachatrian alleged that the information provided in the reports was not accurate and presented false data, while the coverage of the conflict was biased and one-sided.

The MEO notes that the story of “Horizon”, October 3, presented only the victim’s position, therefore the coverage was one-sided. This runs counter the Articles 1.1 and 1.3 of the Code of Conduct of Media Representatives: “prior to publishing, to check the accuracy of information from any source, not to conceal and not to distort facts (..)”, and “to rely on accurate facts when making analysis and comment”.

Even though, the subsequent TV stories showed some pieces from Shahen Khachatrian’s press conference, the MEO finds that, overall, the parties to the conflict were not provided equal opportunities. This is a violation of Articles 6.1 and 6.4 of the Code of Conduct: “to support the free exchange of opinions, regardless of any differences between such opinions and the editorial views”, and “to encourage the public to express their criticism of the media and to be ready for a public discourse on matters of journalistic ethics”.

Since one of the parties to the dispute is a journalist of “Shant” (the deceased patient was his father), there might be some conflict of interests and abuse of position by the media outlet. As a result, the public perception on the issue’s significance may be distorted. Therefore, it would be reasonable if the employee of “Shant” and the TV channel sought other means of covering the issue, say, on another - neutral - media.

Later, the MEO concerns about the possible bias in the coverage of “Shant” were confirmed. On October 9, after the MEO session, the TV channel aired a story about a press conference of doctors regarding the incident at “Kankor”. In its comments to the story, the TV company, specifically mentioned that it will further cover the numerous complaints that it receives against Shahen Khachatryan. This only reinforced the impression that “Shant” does not limit itself by the objective coverage of the issue.

The MEO reaffirms its position that courts should be a last resort. Therefore, the MEO recommends Shahen Khachatryan to refrain from filling a suit, and suggests “Shant” provide the Director of “Kankor” medical center with a right to reply, in terms prescribed by the law, i.e., with no comments, or release the given judgment on its air.

***Adopted at the MEO session of October 9, 2012
In the following composition:***

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“Yerkir Media” TV company
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*MEO was established by the media, joining the self-regulation initiative, which make 48
as of today. In its judgments MEO is guided by Code of Conduct of Media
Representatives, adopted at the self-regulation body’s meeting on March 10, 2007.*