



ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԶԱՆԳՎԱԾՆԻԿԻ լրատվության միջոցների էթիկայի
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**JUDGMENT OF MEDIA ETHICS OBSERVATORY
ON THE COMPLAINT BY
THE COMMISSION ON TELEVISION AND RADIO
REGARDING THE MAY 27 AND JUNE 1, 2021 ISSUES OF
"HAYELI AKUMB" PROGRAM OF
THE ARMENIAN SECOND TV CHANNEL**

A. FACTS

On June 7, 2021, Media Ethics Observatory received the appeal of the Commission on Television and Radio regarding the issues of "Hayeli Akumb" program of the Armenian Second TV Channel, aired on May 27, 2021, at 14:16:13-14: 37:06, and on June 1, 2021, at 14:29:36-15:01:09.

The Commission expects to receive the position of MEO on the statements made during the above-mentioned audio-visual programs.

In the mentioned programs of interview format (guest: deputy of the RA National Assembly of the 7th convocation Gevorg Petrosyan) obscene expressions, insulting statements, hate speech and swearing are heard.

On June 15, 2021, MEO initiated an online discussion of the appeal.

B. ETHICAL NORMS

I. Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists

1.4. To clearly distinguish facts and information from opinion, comment and analysis;

1.5. To rely on accurate facts and trustworthy information when making analysis and comments;

4.2. In case of a conflict between the freedom of expression and other fundamental human rights, the media independently decides what to give preference to, and bears responsibility for its decision;

5.1. To avoid prejudice against people on the ground of their race, sex, age, religion, nationality, geographic origin, sexual orientation, physical handicap, external look or social status;

5.2. Not to promote in any way ethnic or religious hatred and intolerance, or any discrimination on political, social, sexual, and language grounds, exclude hate speech;

6.1. To encourage free exchange of opinions, regardless of any differences between those opinions and the editorial views.

II. Regulations of Media Ethics Observatory

4.7. For the ethical issues related to the activities of audiovisual media service providers the Commission on Television and Radio (according to the RA Law "On Audiovisual Media") shall be recognized as a proper applicant as a state body regulating the sphere, which is also authorized to monitor the observance of the norms of professional ethics by these media. The appeals received from the CTR shall be reviewed in accordance with the current procedure, and if the dispute concerns a TV or radio company that signed the Code, MEO shall provide a judgment, and in other cases, an expert opinion or shall make a statement.

C. MEO JUDGMENT

Media Ethics Observatory

appreciating that

- the Commission on Television and Radio continues to support the highlighting and strengthening of the media self-regulation initiative in the country with the expectation of receiving the position of the Media Ethics Observatory;

underlining that

- hate speech is spread by generating, when the society does not react to the first such words, it leads to further dissemination through repetitions, growing more and more;

- labeling is one of the basic components of hate speech;

taking note of the fact that

- the interviews in question were broadcast in a pre-recorded mode, not live, as well as the fact that Anzhela Tovmasyan, author of the program, coordinator of "Hayeli" club, regularly invites that guest for an interview, and the latter from time to time uses obscene vocabulary, repeating swear words several times, and the TV company continues to fully broadcast them, without editing;

highlighting that

- the above interviews or excerpts from them were also broadcast by other Armenian media, while the Commission applies only in connection with H2;

states:

1. The journalist has the opportunity to interrupt the interlocutor in case of hate and unethical speech by the latter, ask him/her to show politeness as much as possible. And the use or encouragement of such a vocabulary by a journalist or a media strongly contradicts the rules of the international and Armenian journalistic ethics. Especially when the constant use of obscene, grossly insulting expressions does not add anything in terms of content to make the audience understand the meaning of the main message;

2. Prior to broadcasting the recorded programs, the TV company had the opportunity to edit the material, to fully convey the interviewee's thoughts, to include the host's speech if necessary, while removing the unethical expressions.

MEO calls on

- Especially the broadcast media to follow their air, and to exclude as much as possible the spread of hate speech and bad language among the public;

- The Commission on Television and Radio to be consistent in detecting violations of the above-mentioned ethical norms on the air of other authorized broadcasters, to make them a subject of professional discussion, and to exclude such language to the maximum extent in the future.

MEDIA ETHICS OBSERVATORY recalls that the representatives of the media that have signed the Code, recognizing the authority of MEO, which was elected by them, to review the compliance of their actions and publications with the provisions of the Code, have expressed their readiness to publish the MEO decisions on their media.

Adopted on July 12, 2021

by the following MEO composition:

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Ruben BABAYAN, Director of Yerevan State Puppet Theater after Hovhannes Toumanyan

Shushan DOYDOYAN, President of Freedom of Information Center

Karineh HARUTYUNYAN, Executive Director of Gyumri “GALA” TV Company

Ara GHAZARYAN, Lawyer

Ashot MELIKYAN, Chairman of Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression

Gnel NALBANDYAN, Chief Editor of “Zham” news program of “Armenia” TV company, Chief Editor of “Newmag” magazine

Boris NAVASARDIAN, President of Yerevan Press Club

Nouneh SARKISSIAN, Managing Director of Media Initiatives Center

Anzhela STEPANYAN, Editor of Armavir “Alt” TV company

Gegham VARDANYAN, Producer at Media.am

[Media Ethics Observatory](#) was established by the media, joining the self-regulation

initiative, which make 69 as of today. In its judgments MEO is guided by Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists, adopted at the self-regulation body's meeting on March 10, 2007, and revised on May 16, 2015