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**MEDIA ETHICS OBSERVATORY**

**STATEMENT**

**ON THE COMPLAINT (APPLICANT: ZARUHI HOVHANNISYAN)**

**AGAINST “BLIND WORLD” TV SERIES**

**BROADCAST BY “ARMENIA” TV**

On September 9, 2022, Media Ethics Observatory received the complaint of human rights activist Zaruhi Hovhannisyman regarding “Blind World” series aired on “Armenia” TV Company, which, in particular, read:

*“Armenia” TV Company has started airing another series that follows a recurring pattern of portraying male characters with lustful, rough and violent behavior that use obscene language. Alongside this, the series presents women as orphaned, unhappy, gossipy individuals that are subjected to incessant abuse. ...It is unacceptable to once again place excessive importance on the topic of virginity, presenting it as one of the cornerstone values within our society, which, under the guise of “justice”, leads to systematic manifestations of violence against women.”*

Media Ethics Observatory has thoroughly examined the complaint and the presented episodes and acknowledges the concerns raised by the human rights activist. MEO, in its turn, affirms that it is evident that Armenian TV series, which have been aired for decades, are of low quality, which is the result of insufficient professional knowledge, skills and resources.

MEO finds it necessary to highlight that “Armenia” TV Company, as a broadcast media, has failed to sufficiently consider Clause 12 of Article 57 of the RA Law “On Audiovisual Media”, which defines “... **the requirements for the broadcast** of films featuring explicit violence, as well as audiovisual programs that may potentially have a negative impact on the health, mental and physical growth and upbringing of minors.”

Especially that a precedent exists wherein the Commission of Television and Radio imposed a fine on “Armenia” TV Company amounting to 500 times the minimum salary for broadcasting another TV series.

MEO also considers the actions, motivation, and manner of speech style exhibited by the characters depicted in “Blind World” TV series to be deeply concerning. They tend to establish themselves as “accepted” behavioral models in the eyes of viewers and sometimes have a greater impact than the positive messages embedded within the film's script.

In accordance with the Media Ethics Observatory statute, MEO examines and records solely violations of journalistic ethics. MEO is not authorized to assess the quality of artistic work, the ethics of the means of expression employed, directorial solutions, and performance of actors.

Nevertheless, given that the series in question is being broadcast in a public multiplex by a media that has obtained a national distribution slot, we direct the attention of “Armenia” TV Company towards the principle of professional ethics. This principle underscores the necessity of exercising tact when filming episodes about children or with their involvement, especially when they include scenes of violence and intolerance. Manifestations of sexual discrimination, prejudiced attitude towards women should also be excluded. These requirements are mandatory for any creative work and are outlined in professional ethics codes, including the Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists.

MEO emphasizes that it does not refer to the outright rejection of images of violence, cruel treatment and other sensitive topics and scenes. Simply, they should be presented within the framework of artistic rules and techniques, and handled with such skill that there is no need for mechanical displays of violence.

Unfortunately, the Armenian TV series industry in general rarely manages to do this.

MEO calls on the broadcast media to refrain from the temptation of ensuring high viewership at any cost, and be guided solely by public interests and high artistic standards.

***Adopted on November 9, 2022  
by the following MEO composition:***

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

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

**Ashot MELIKYAN**, Chairman of Committee to Protect Freedom of  
Expression

**Boris NAVASARDIAN**, President of Yerevan Press Club

**Ara SHIRINYAN**, Chairman of the Council of Public Television and Radio  
Company of Armenia

**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*