



## ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԶԱՆԳՎԱԾՍՆԻՆ ԵՐԱՏՎՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄԻԳՐԱՆԵՐԻ ԷԹԻԿՍԻ ԴԻՏՈՐԴ ՄԱՐՄԻՆ

9B, Ghazar Parpetsi str.  
0002 Yerevan, Republic of Armenia  
Tel.: +374 10 53 00 67; 53 35 41  
Fax: +374 10 53 56 61  
E-mail: meo@ypc.am

### MEO Composition:

Davit ALAVERDYAN

Narineh AVETISYAN

Ruben BABAYAN

Levon BARSEGHYAN

Shushan DOYDOYAN

Karineh HARUTYUNYAN

Ara GHAZARYAN

Ashot MELIKYAN

Gnel NALBANDYAN

Boris NAVASARDIAN

Ara SHIRINYAN

Nouneh SARKISSIAN

Vigen SARGSYAN

Anzhela STEPANYAN

## JUDGMENT OF MEDIA ETHICS OBSERVATORY

### Regarding the Case of the “Commission on Television and Radio against FreeNews”

#### A. FACTS

1. On July 6, 2023, Media Ethics Observatory received the complaint of the Commission on Television and Radio against “FreeNews” TV Company.
2. On June 25, 2023, the guest of “Free Talk” program voiced the following expressions, deemed unacceptable by the CTR:  
*“...He entered a cafe in Yerevan, Armenia (I won't mention the name now to avoid negative advertising), the waiter demanded to speak Russian with him. When are we going to flip over the table in that case? This is not a call to violence.”*  
*“... A Russian scum stands on the street, a blogger, I guess, and says: “Prpragmpik (Ed.: parody to the Armenian word for ‘champagne’) ...Can you say what it means in Armenian?”*  
*“...And suddenly our folks, our Armenians, are approached on the street, and they don't take that microphone and hit their head with it. This should be done.”*
3. The host of “Free Talk” did not oppose the above-mentioned expressions in any way.

#### B. ETHICAL NORMS

##### Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists

- 1.3. To demonstrate a responsible approach to the dissemination of information taken from social networks or new media, to be sure to mention whether it is verified, reliable, or subject to further verification.
- 1.5. To rely on accurate facts and trustworthy information when making analysis and comments.
- 3.5.1 Not to disseminate statements or write posts on social networks that may be perceived as manifestations of racial, gender, religious, political or other discrimination. This also refers to posting photos and videos.
- 3.5.6. To moderate comments on publications on social network pages of media, if possible deleting entries of an openly offensive nature containing hate speech, calls to violence or other actions prohibited by law.
- 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.

6.3. To admit mistakes and to be ready to correct them.

### C. MEO JUDGMENT

- The program guest's expression "... *The waiter demanded to speak Russian with him. When are we going to flip over the table in that case? This is not a call to violence*" does not constitute a call to violence, but rather an emotional description of revolting against some phenomenon. It would be a call to violence if it was directed against any individual, group or structure. Therefore, the program host had no need to object to this statement.
- The program guest's expression "*A Russian scum stands on the street, a blogger, I guess, and says: "Prpragmpik..."*" is evident hate speech against a specific ethnic group. This is a violation of articles 5.1 and 5.2 of the Code of Ethics, therefore the host should have interrupted the guest and indicated that it was not allowed on air.
- The program guest's expression "... *And suddenly our folks, our Armenians, are approached on the street, and they don't take that microphone and hit their head with it. This should be done*" is not a call to violence since there is no mentioning of any person or organization to which the alleged call to violence could be directed.
- MEO urges "FreeNews" TV Company to search and find effective ways to eliminate the mentioned violations.

#### **Note**

Media Ethics Observatory recalls that the representatives of the media that have signed the Code have expressed their readiness to publish the specific parts extracted from the Media Ethics Observatory judgments that relate to violations of the Code, without adding any editorial remarks. They have also committed to notifying MEO by providing a link to the particular publication.

***Adopted on July 20, 2023  
by the following MEO composition:***

**Davit ALAVERDYAN**, Chief Editor of "Mediamax" news agency  
**Narineh AVETISYAN**, Executive Director of Vanadzor "Lori" TV Company

**Ruben BABAYAN**, Director, Professor  
at Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinematography  
**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 "Newmag" Publishing House

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

**Ara SHIRINYAN**, Chairman of the Council of Public Broadcaster of  
Armenia

**Nouneh SARKISSIAN**, Managing Director of Media Initiatives Center

**Vigen SARGSYAN**, Chairman of the Commission on Professional Ethics  
of Yerevan Press Club

**Anzhela STEPANYAN**, Editor of Armavir “Alt” TV Company

*[Media Ethics Observatory](#) was established by the media, joining the self-regulation initiative, which make 76 as of today. In its judgments MEO is guided by the Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists, adopted on March 10, 2007 and revised at the June 25, 2023 general meeting of the media that joined the self-regulation initiative.*