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JUDGMENT OF MEDIA ETHICS OBSERVATORY

Regarding the “CTR v. Second Armenian TV Channel” case

A. FACTS

1. On July 6, 2023, Media Ethics Observatory received a letter from the Commission on Television and Radio. The CTR requested the MEO position regarding the potential violations of ethics during the June 25, 2023 issue of “Hayeli Akumb” program aired on “Second Armenian TV Channel”.
2. The CTR raised concerns about H2 providing the program guest Armineh Adibekyan a platform to make severe statements on its air, which MEO finds inappropriate to quote.
3. On July 7, 2023, MEO reached out to H2 via email, informing about a new complaint.

B. BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

1. Despite the [Clarification](#) issued by MEO on April 17, 2023 regarding numerous and repeated violations on H2 air, the Commission of Television and Radio still expected MEO to review this complaint.
2. At several sessions held between October 2022 and August 2023, MEO discussed the CTR appeals regarding the “Second Armenian TV Channel”, which were mostly related to the coverage of “Hayeli Akumb” press conferences. The discussions at the MEO sessions and the General Meeting of the Self-Regulation Initiative (Hermon, June 23-25, 2023) exposed significant contradictions between the representatives of the self-regulatory body and the media regarding the interpretation of the Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists and the MEO activities. The judgments issued on the previous complaints against H2 did not have any impact on the editorial policy of the TV Channel.
3. The CTR regularly reaches out to MEO, suggesting to examine any instances of journalistic or quoted profanity, vulgar language, use of slang and manifestations of hate speech in H2's political programming.
4. MEO regularly underscores that broadcasting such content is not appropriate for the media that have joined the media self-regulation

initiative. This practice runs counter to the principles of quality journalism.

5. H2 regularly declares that according to their editors, this is a manifestation of their freedom of speech.

C. MEO JUDGMENT

1. The specific expressions in question directly name the individuals who are the recipients of the insults and hate speech. This is a violation of Provision 5.2 of the [Code](#), which states: *“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.”*

2. The host during the interview or press conference should have warned the guest about the unacceptability of anti-social vocabulary. Meanwhile, in that case the host encouraged her coarse speech. The fact that such content is created in response to the actions or speech of political opponents cannot justify gross and frequent violations of the rules of ethics. MEO believes that the broadcaster must refuse to disseminate indecent expressions.

3. H2 showed bias again by broadcasting the political statements in the video pieces in question without offering any opposing viewpoint, giving grounds to conclude that that its editorial stance aligns closely with the guests' political positions. This circumstance runs contrary to Provision 6.1 of the Code, which states: *“To encourage free exchange of opinions, regardless of any differences between those opinions and the editorial views.”*

4. Without drawing any conclusions from the previous judgments of MEO, H2 continues to violate Provision 6.3 (which defines: *“To admit mistakes and to be ready to correct them”*) of the [Code](#), signed by the media itself.

Reminder

The representatives of the media that have signed the [Code](#) acknowledge the authority of MEO (which was elected by them) to review the compliance of their actions and publications with the provisions of this Code. They express 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 also commit to notifying MEO by providing a link to the particular publication.

**Adopted on August 29, 2023
by the following MEO composition:**

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Narineh AVETISYAN, Executive Director of Vanadzor “Lori” TV Company

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[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.