



**ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԶԱՆԳՎԱԾԱՆԻՆ ԵՐԱՏՎՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄԻԳՈՇՆԵՐԻ ԷԹԻԿԱՆԻ
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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 Edgar Ghazaryan 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. In the context of intense public debates, a socio-political figure may employ harsh and intolerant language, resorting even to certain provocative messages, provided they do not contain hate speech, violent rhetoric, or apparent manifestations of discrimination. In that sense, as a guest of “Hayeli” club, Edgar Ghazaryan approached the boundary of acceptable political discourse, without breaching it. Hence, the TV Channel did not violate any provision of the Code by broadcasting his speech.

2. Meanwhile, the press conference host, whose primary role is to offer the guest a chance to voice his opinions and relay his message to the public via journalists, initiated the first attack herself. By interfering with the guest's speech and going beyond the acceptable limits, she tried to escalate the press conference's atmosphere and set its tone. If the program's purpose was to present the guest's viewpoint and evaluations, the media airing the event should have avoided broadcasting the host's speech containing offensive language and insults and should have edited the recorded video material accordingly. By failing to follow the numerous calls of MEO on this matter, H2 once again violated 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.*”

3. 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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Company

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

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Boris NAVASARDIAN, Honorary President of Yerevan Press Club

Davit ALAVERDYAN, Chief Editor of “Mediamax” News Agency

Ruben BABAYAN, Director, Professor
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Vigen SARGSYAN, Chairman of the Commission on Professional Ethics
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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.