



MEDIA ETHICS OBSERVATORY OF ARMENIA

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EXPERT OPINION OF MEDIA ETHICS OBSERVATORY

Regarding the complaint of Aravot.am Editor Anna Israelyan against the
“Gender Disinformation in the Armenian Media” Report by OxYGen
Foundation

A. FACTS

1. Anna Israelyan, the editor of “Aravot.am” news website, approached the Information Disputes Council with a request for an expert opinion regarding the conclusions related to “Aravot” in OxYGen Foundation’s [Final Report](#), which in her opinion, tarnished the reputation of the media. The report was produced following a monitoring conducted within the framework of “Combating Gendered Disinformation: Reclaiming Narratives 2.0” Project, funded by the Artemis Alliance Project.
2. The report contained the following statement: *““Aravot.am” ranks second with 55 publications. ... “Hraparak.am” is the leader in the dissemination of gender disinformation, followed by “Aravot.am.”*”
3. Two hyperlinks related to “Aravot” analyzed psychologist Karineh Nalchajyan’s statements at “Hayeli” club and NA Speaker Alen Simonyan’s speech at a National Assembly session. The report highlighted that 55 publications on aravot.am contained gender disinformation. However, apart from these two links, there were no other references to texts containing these alleged violations.
4. The Information Disputes Council published its [Opinion](#) on February 28, 2025.
5. Prior to publishing the opinion, IDC held a discussion on the dispute with the consent and participation of the involved parties.
6. OxYGen also expressed its willingness to meet with members of Media Ethics Observatory to discuss the coverage of gender issues.

B. ETHICAL NORMS

I. [Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists](#)

... editors and journalists are obligated:

- 1.4. to clearly distinguish facts and information from opinion, comment and

analysis;

6.2. to be ready to meet with persons or representatives of organizations who feel offended or defamed by a certain publication, and provide an opportunity of response for all those against who criticism and accusations have been made in the publications;

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

II. MEO [Regulations](#)

4.13. Complaints regarding the publications by non-member media of the Self-Regulation Initiative can be reviewed with the media's consent. Nevertheless, if the media refuses to grant consent, MEO reserves the right to present an expert opinion on the publication, disseminating it through the channels at its disposal.

C. MEO EXPERT OPINION

- Considering that current trends in the information sphere broaden the concept of “media” and acknowledging that OxYGen Foundation is an organization known across quite a broad range of circles, with its website serving as an open and public platform where extensive materials of public importance with a certain influence on public opinion are shared, MEO believes that the principles of media ethics are applicable to the content disseminated through the foundation's website.
- Consequently, “Aravot.am” editor Anna Israelyan’s complaint against OxYGen Foundation's “Gender Disinformation in the Armenian Media” report can be analyzed from the perspective of the [Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists](#).
- MEO commends the fact that, prior to the publication of the report, OxYGen initiated a discussion of its content with media.
- It is also commendable that the foundation’s representatives expressed their willingness to provide clarifications on the issues raised and took part in the online discussion concerning the report and the related complaint with the IDC members, the complainant, as well as MEO. This is fully consistent with [provision 6.2](#) of the Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists.
- MEO, agreeing with the assessments of the IDC opinion regarding Anna Israelyan’s complaint, observes that the report, at least in its sections related to “Aravot,” violated [provision 1.4](#) of the Code. Specifically, the foundation presented 2 examples of “gender disinformation” as established facts, but failed to sufficiently substantiate that these examples aligned with the definition proposed in the report, which describes “gender disinformation” as “... false and deceptive content that is disseminated with the intent of deliberately misleading and causing harm to individuals or groups.” Using solely the headline as a reference fails to provide the necessary grounds for drawing relevant conclusions.
- Furthermore, the report indicated that during the monitoring, 55 cases matching the specified definition were identified in “Aravot.” Nevertheless, apart from the above-mentioned 2 controversial examples, no additional references were made to them, nor were any citations

provided.

- MEO believes that the report in question should be evaluated using the same criteria applied to other information disseminated in the public domain. According to the monitoring methodology (as outlined in the report's introduction), the goal is to reveal prevailing discourses containing gender disinformation and to identify those engaged in their dissemination. However, this methodology fails to clarify how the authors of the report determined its "intentionality" and "intent to cause harm" when addressing the feature of "gender disinformation." Similarly, the "classification" of media cannot be regarded as well-founded either.
- The introduction to the report also suggests that it should have shown "who is most frequently responsible for spreading gender disinformation—for example, journalists/program hosts/program guests/ or "protagonists" of reportages." However, the report failed to provide quantitative data on such a distinction, leading to a perception that in all recorded cases the media were both the authors and the entities responsible for "gender disinformation." The reputation of the media labeled as "leading," particularly that of "Aravot", may be tarnished due to insufficient substantiation and such flaws in the methodology. This also provides MEO with grounds to address this information dispute.
- Since oxygen.org.am is not a member of the Media Self-Regulation Initiative, OxYGen Foundation is not obligated to accept or publish this expert opinion issued by MEO. However, MEO draws the attention of its colleagues to [provision 6.3](#) of the Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists (to admit mistakes and to be ready to correct them).
- MEO suggests that the foundation and the complainant consider two proven options for resolving the dispute: A) arranging an informational discussion between the foundation's representatives and "Aravot" through written exchanges on the pages of "Aravot" or via an on-air conversation on that platform or another media; B) publishing a revised version of the report on Oxygen Foundation's website, taking into account the opinions of the IDC and MEO.
- Given that 4 members of Media Ethics Observatory took part in the online meeting arranged by the IDC and subsequently presented to MEO the key points of the discussion, MEO considered it inappropriate to hold another discussion prior to adopting its expert opinion. Nonetheless, if needed, MEO is ready to contribute to the implementation of its proposed methods for resolving the dispute.
- MEO underscores that the subject of this expert opinion is to examine the compliance of the content of the OxYGen report with the norms of media ethics.
- MEO does not undertake a review of publications from the monitored media from the perspective of their compliance with ethical principles. At the same time, MEO, relying on the Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists, is ready to examine the publications identified as problematic by OxYGen and issue an opinion, provided relevant complaints are submitted.

***Adopted on March 10, 2025
by the following MEO composition:***

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Anzhela STEPANYAN, Editor of Armavir “Alt” TV Company

[Media Ethics Observatory](#) was established by the media, joining the self-regulation initiative, which make 88 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 May 18, 2024 general meeting of the media that joined the self-regulation initiative.