

9th Annual Meeting of BRAF Bucharest - Romania on 4-5 October 2018

Presentations from Albania Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA)

Information & experience regarding the progress in Albania in the field of audio-visual media services (Since the previous 8th Annual Meeting of BRAF- 2017)

1.1 The process of digitalization

The transition from analogue television broadcasts to digital ones, which is considered as a priority process, is accompanied by a public information campaign and as a result of informing, explaining and accompanying the public towards the full transition in digital broadcasts is defined as a necessity for the successful completion of the process.

By the end of this year, analogue broadcasting will close to about 70 percent of the audience. Meanwhile, digital broadcasts cover about 90 percent of the population.

The public broadcaster has two digital platforms, one for its channels and the other for existing local and regional analogue channels. Those citizens who attend Public Broadcasting programs have access to 34 free TV channels.

For citizens who live with social assistance, the authorities have distributed around 88,000 free decoders, such as access to tracking digital broadcasts.

1.2 Legal framework

During year 2017, AMA held a 9-month consultation process with stakeholders, domestic and foreign experts for improving the Broadcasting Code, which is the most important bylaw regulating the audiovisual media activity. The first version of the Broadcasting Code's text was approved in January 2004.

Therefore it has been subject to evaluation for amendments, changes and specifications through a series of face-to-face and virtual consulting meetings with the contribution of the following actors: Commissioner for the Right to Information and Data Protection, Centre for Children's Rights Protection, State Agency for Children's Rights Protection, Observatory for Children's Rights, Women's Democracy Network Albania, Albanian Centre for Public Communication, National Blind People's Association, Order of Physicians, Order of Pharmacists, Journalism and

Communication Department at the University of Tirana etc., also including representatives from OSCE and the Council of Europe.

The final text was approved by AMA at the end of 2017, and included most of the 75 remarks and specific proposals put forth by domestic institutions and organizations, and by a detailed expertise provided by the Council of Europe.

Pursuant to the functions set forth by the Law No. 97/2013 “On Audiovisual Media in the Republic of Albania”, as amended, during the reporting period, AMA has adopted, as well:

- Amendments to the Regulation “On Requirements and Procedures for Granting the Audio Broadcasting License” (06 October 2017), aiming at regulating the renewal procedure of licenses on rebroadcasting audio content of third parties.
- Amendments of the Regulation “On Determining the Requirements and Procedures for the Listing of Numeric Network Based Audio and/or Audiovisual Services” (25 October 2017).
- Payments for the licensing/authorization and services delivered by AMA, with Decision No. 220, dated 01 December 2017.
- The Regulation "On monitoring the spectrum of frequencies" (12 March 2018)
- The Regulation “On Audio and/or Audiovisual Commercial Communication. Forms, Conditions, and Daily Airing Time Allowed for Advertising” (19 March 2018)

The consultation process with stakeholders and the wider public has been also undertaken for this Regulation through face-to-face meetings and review of proposals and remarks electronically sent to AMA. The OSCE provided the AMA with detailed expertise on this Regulation.

- The Regulation "On the Criteria for Provision of Protected Services". (20 April 2018).

1.3 Partnerships with actors outside the audiovisual market

Since 2015, AMA has promoted partnerships with actors outside the audiovisual market, which offer professional expertise in research and study in the field of audio-visual media and training of journalists and editors.

Several organizations and independent institutions that operate in the media market have been supported by AMA for giving trainings and qualifications in the area of news reporting, focusing on the protection of minors, avoidance of hate speech and discrimination, gender equality, media literacy etc.

In the framework of the collaboration with partners, during 2017, AMA supported several projects in the field of audiovisual media.

- For the first time, AMA has focused on realizing a project on media literacy. By collaborating with the Albanian Media Institute in Tirana, four debate forums were organized in main cities on the topic "Television and citizens", and a survey was

conducted and published, with 500 students from the high schools from Tirana, on "Media in the perspective of young people".

-The Department of Journalism and Communication at the University of Tirana in the framework of the study project "The Crisis of Albanian Television and the Need for a New Economic Model" (supported by AMA), held on December 2017 the scientific conference titled "Economic Models of the Television Industry in Albania". The conference had two main topics, first focusing on managerial and ownership aspects in the television industry, and secondly by analyzing the relationship between economic models and funding with media content.

In this project, 10 pedagogues and about 25 students from the three levels of study, Bachelor, Master and Doctorate, were included.

During 2017 AMA supported different projects, where 170 journalists working in audiovisual media, both on national and local level were involved such as:

-The project on "Responsible and ethical journalism", which was implemented from the *Active Media Center*;

-The project for the improvement of reporting victims of gender-based violence, family based violence and trafficking was implemented with the WDN's network.

-The project on monitoring the Broadcasting Code implementation focusing during reporting for minors, hate speech and encouraging tolerance was conducted by the Albanian Center for Public Communication.

-A scientific conference was organized at the AMA premises, in collaboration with the Faculty of Communication and Journalism, University of Tirana with the call for expertise on the subject: *'Fake News and challenges for the future'*.

1.4 Other items

-AMA from 2016 is publishing a Periodic Bulletin, every six months, which represents the introduction of a stream of data from the audiovisual market performance (technical data, economic and financial data, ownership indicators, content of broadcast programs, committed human resources etc.). The Bulletin is a product that gives a clear view of the market and helps in the transparency of its actual performance. Actually, AMA published its third Bulletin for the period (01 January 2017 – 30 June 2017).

The Bulletin Nr.4 for the period (01 July 2017- 31 December 2017) is ongoing and we plan to publish it on November.

- In the audiovisual media market, there are still problems with working contracts in large companies. But it is evident that the process of declaring real wages for journalists in these companies has faced significant improvements. AMA and the Media Parliamentary Commission organized on May 2018 a round table where this problem was in focus, and both institutions are in a commitment process to standardize audiovisual journalists' contracts.

-Audience measurement remains still an unresolved problem in the Albanian media market, especially in the audiovisual sector. The service offered by some companies has not created trust

in the operators and there are many differences in their reports, an aspect that leaves doubts regarding the audience measurement use for profit purposes.

-New media outlets are very attractive and have become a powerful competitor for the audiovisual media. About 450 online platforms and blogs are believed to distribute news and analysis from the actuality. A significant number of journalists and editors who were previously engaged in electronic media have now been relocated to online media.

Traditional audiovisual media has lost advertising monopoly, as new media are preferred by companies that promote goods and services.