

**The 8th Annual Meeting
of the Black Sea Broadcasting Regulatory Authorities Forum
(Belgrade, Serbia, on the 30-31 October, 2017)**

Information on the progress and objectives achieved since the previous Annual Meeting of BRAF, in the broadcasting sector (Albania)

Over the past 12 months, the Audiovisual Media Authority of Albania, AMA, has had a lot of engagements in the performance of the audiovisual market, in guaranteeing a free market and quality services for citizens, both in public and private audiovisual offerings.

a. The digitalization process of audiovisual services

AMA has influenced this process to ends as soon as possible. In cooperation with the Public Broadcaster, as well as other institutions working in this sector, legal arrangements have been closed and an infrastructure suitable for digital terrestrial broadcasting is currently being built. Private companies that are licensed to build digital platforms are soon in the process.

So far, a test has been carried out in a limited administrative area and transition from analog to digital terrestrial has gone very well. Currently is being tested and a major administrative area in the country's southeast. The next step in this process is the largest administrative area of the country (Tirana - Durres) where is living about one - third of Albania's population

b. Improvement of the Broadcasting Code

In this year, the AMA Broadcasting Code has been considered as a priority. The current text of the Broadcasting Code has been approved by our Authority since January 2014. For more than three years, there have been concrete feedbacks and proposals for improvements and amendments from SMP-s, institutions and individuals themselves. But the very nature of new developments in the audiovisual media industry, new formats of broadcasting and convergence, or the beginning of the Complaint Council's work in April 2016 are the reasons for launching the process.

Two stages of public counseling have been implemented in this process: apart from the one-month period stipulated by the law on such acts, a pre-consultation and withdrawal of opinions and proposals from AMA partners, co-operative entities and institutions that are engaged in aspects that includes the content of the Code. In the meetings, OSCE and Council of Europe representatives were engaged in consultations.

Assessments of existing text were numerous by the partners. The biggest focus was, on two sensitive aspects, in audiovisual broadcasting:

- children protection
- protecting personal data.

This discussion flow, served in drafting, an improved draft text, which is currently in the public consultation phase, for opinions and proposals from audio and audiovisual subjects, organizations, interested institutions, citizens, etc.

c. Media coverage of general elections June 25, 2017 and the role of AMA

Based on Albanian law on electronic media as well as in the electoral code, Audiovisual Media Authority provided its service with the recording of content transmitted by audio and audiovisual subjects during a month of electoral campaign development. Part of the AMA staff was involved in the monitoring process of how the electoral campaign covers the audio and audiovisual subjects.

Despite the fact that AMA Monitoring Studio's available inventory remains limited, the service that was provided was professional. In the election processes of the last three years there has been no controversy or negative assessment by the Central Election Commission or international observers on the monitoring data provided by the AMA.

Parliament, on the eve of general elections, on June 2017 made an amendment to the law on audiovisual media, on political advertising during the electoral campaign period. For this amendment AMA was not consulted in advance. Fortunately, this unchanged legal change with interest groups did not find concrete implementation in reality.

Out of the election campaign period for AMA there has been and remains a commitment to legal enforcement in respecting the balancing of audio and audiovisual content being broadcast to cover the activity of the political spectrum in the majority and the opposition. For a period of three years, the AMA official website publishes on a regular basis, on a regular basis,

information on the time that national audiovisual subjects devote to the activity of political actors but also the topics covered in the main news editions.

AMA intervened in those cases where there was broadcast of political advertisements, which are prohibited by the law on audiovisual media. We have noted that audiovisual operators have more responsibility and sensitivity to respecting the law and sub-legal acts in this regard.

Proposal

In the framework of the Black Sea countries' cooperation, as well as BRAF, we are aware of the fact that the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation BSCEC has available funding for projects and programs in different fields.

AMA is ready to propose a concrete project, contributing to aspects that are the focus of our regulatory authorities' network (BRAF), such as the protection of minors or media education.

Our interest is: from the funds allocated to the BSEC, do we have access to apply for projects and programs?

I repeat if this is possible we are ready to propose concrete ideas in order to improve the performance of the audiovisual market.