

**COUNTRY REPORT, REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
46th EPRA Meeting, Vienna, 11-13 October 2017**

Jubilee marked by a conference of the media regulatory authorities in the region

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of its foundation, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services organized a regional conference for the media regulatory authorities of the region. The Conference was attended by representatives of the regulatory bodies of Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo and Bulgaria, as well as representatives of the civic organizations active in the media sphere, several institutions and media professionals. The topics discussed at the regional conference were the professional journalistic standards in the media programmes and the role of regulatory authorities, political pluralism outside electoral processes and the influence of media policies on the development of media literacy.

Bilateral and international cooperation

On the fringes of the above-mentioned regional conference, Agency representatives held a bilateral meeting with representatives of the media regulatory authority of the Republic of Bulgaria, at which the participants exchanged experiences in the spheres of media regulation, media coverage monitoring during electoral processes and activities aimed at media literacy development.

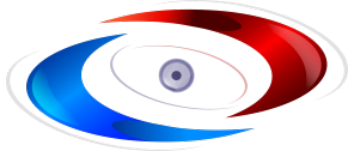
In the previous period, the Agency also had meetings with both resident and visiting representatives of the international community, such as the British Ambassador to the country and the EU expert Reinhard Priebe and his team, during the latter's visit to the country.

Cooperation with educational institutions

In the reporting period, the Agency was also active in the field of cooperation with higher-educational institutions in the country and abroad.

In June, the Agency hosted a visit by a group of students of the University of Business and Technology (UBT) from Pristina, Republic of Kosovo. During their stay, the students learned about the everyday activities of the Agency, its competences and the role and functioning of the Agency Council. They showed keen interest in and were provided with information about the local media-related regulations and the conditions existing in the domestic media industry.

In July 2017, the Agency signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the "Iustinianus Primus" Faculty of Law in Skopje, with the aim of exchanging relevant experiences and knowledge, educating students in the areas in which both institutions have staffing potentials and interests, holding trainings and



REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
AGENCY FOR AUDIO AND AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA SERVICES

Panko Brashnarov Palace, „Makedonija“ 38, 1000 Skopje
tel. +389 23103 400; fax:+389 23103 401
e-mail: contact@avmu.mk ; web site: www.avmu.mk

preparing expert and scholarly works, extending expert assistance to certain projects and other forms of exchange of knowledge and experience.

Media coverage of elections

The Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia announced the 2017 Local Elections on 6 August 2017. In accordance with the Methodology for Monitoring Media Coverage of Elections by the Radio and Television Programming Services during Electoral Processes, the Agency commenced the monitoring on 7 August 2017, a day after the elections were announced. A few days after the start of the monitoring, the Agency also held a working meeting with representatives of the national television and radio stations, so as to remind them of the rules for media coverage of the elections and the obligations that broadcasters had relating to their reporting during this period, under the provisions of the Electoral Code.

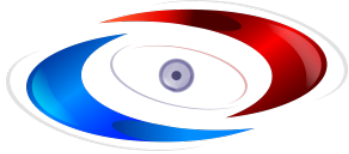
Monitoring in the period between the announcement of the elections and the start of the election campaign covers two televisions and two radio-programming services of the Public Broadcaster (MRT), 14 commercial television stations that broadcast programme at the state level and two national commercial radio stations. As regards the other programming services, until the start of the election campaign, the Agency performs monitoring only in case of complaints.

Current monitoring focuses on the provisions of the Electoral Code that apply to the period from the elections' announcement until the start of the election campaign. It covers the 24-hour programmes of the televisions and radios subject to monitoring, focusing particularly on the central news editions and the special information programmes (interviews, debates and other information programmes).

Based on the established practice, the Agency publishes reports on how the media outlets reported in their newscasts and other information programmes for each ten-day period. In case of violations against the provisions of the Electoral Code, reports are prepared immediately after violations have been detected.

The majority of broadcasters submitted their pricelists for paid political advertising during the election campaign in the first five days after the elections' announcement, i.e. by 11 August 2017, as obligated under the relevant Electoral Code provisions.

Based on the obligations established by the Electoral Code, in line with the Memorandum of Cooperation it had concluded with the State Election Commission (SEC), the Agency has been submitting weekly reports to the SEC members since the day the elections were announced. In these reports, it has been informing the SEC about its activities. The reports are available on the Agency's website.



2018-2022 Strategy for the Development of Audio and Audiovisual Media Service Industry

In accordance with its 2017 Work Programme, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services has started preparing its Strategy for the Development of Audio and Audiovisual Media Services Industry for the period 2018-2022. The Strategy aims to determine the conditions currently existing in the area of audio and audiovisual media service industry, define the goals and directions for the development of this business activity in the following five years, and specify the concrete activities for the achievement of these goals. The same is envisaged as a result of a broad-based consultation process involving all the stakeholders in this industry.

The Strategy focuses on the following six fundamental areas:

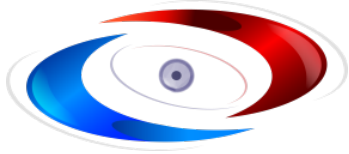
1. Professionalism and editorial independence of the media.
2. Protection and development of media pluralism.
3. Human rights protection in media contents.
4. Stimulating market development and competition.
5. Regulatory framework ensuring development of the media.
6. Development of media literacy.

Promoting social inclusion and ensuring media literacy

On the Agency's initiative, a Media Literacy Network of the Republic of Macedonia was established with the aim of promoting cooperation among various stakeholders in the Macedonian society who create and implement policies and carry out activities and projects in the sphere of media literacy. The Network has 35 members (public institutions and ministries, civic organizations, educational institutions and broadcasters), and continues to be open to new members. As part of the Network's first project, a DVD is being prepared, containing information on media literacy, which is planned to be distributed to the schools around the country and among the broader public, along with copies of an already printed leaflet dedicated to this topic, all with the aim of raising public awareness about the importance of media literacy.

Analyses of the market of audio and audiovisual media services and employee structure in the audio and audiovisual media service industry in 2016

In the reporting period, the Agency prepared two analyses on certain aspects of the audiovisual media service industry during the previous year: Analysis of the Market of Audio and Audiovisual Media Services in 2016, and Employee Structure Analysis of the Audio and Audiovisual Media Service Industry in 2016. The former presents data about the number of broadcasters, their economic performances in 2016 (total revenues, income structure, total expenditures and their structure, the financial operational results, and the average number of regular employees), as well as data about the



REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
AGENCY FOR AUDIO AND AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA SERVICES

Panko Brashnarov Palace, „Makedonija“ 38, 1000 Skopje
tel. +389 23103 400; fax:+389 23103 401
e-mail: contact@avmu.mk ; web site: www.avmu.mk

TVs' viewership and radios' listenership in 2016. The latter depicts the employee structure in this sector in terms of the type of their posts (journalists, editors, managers, technical staff, production staff, marketing and other personnel), their employment status (regular or part-time), gender, level of education, and ethnicity. Both analyses are available at the Agency's website.

Constant reminder of the need for uninterrupted reporting on media's part and media professionals' safety

In the period covered by this report, the Agency has remained vigilant over the situation in the country regarding journalists' safety as they perform their everyday tasks, and has kept underlining the need to ensure conditions for the journalists to be able to inform the public about developments in the country without any hindrances. On several occasions in the reporting period, whenever some local media were the target of threats, pressures, insults, as well as physical and verbal threats, the Agency strongly condemned the incidents and took every opportunity to call for respect for the dignity of the journalist profession, protection of media professionals' safety and for ensuring conditions for their uninterrupted reporting.