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Broadcasting activity, programming policy, professional and ethical standards of RTK

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Abstract. RTK started its activity with only two hours of programming a day, later extended to four, and to achieve 20 hours of programming a day, of which about 65% of the overall program was local production. Through the years, RTK as a public media continued to accomplish its goals and objectives.

This medium was required to keep the balance between programs of general interest and the specific programs that serve the needs of viewers, necessarily, have to do a combination of news programs, sports, programs based on facts, current affairs programs, various documentaries, debates and discussions, cultural programs, etc.

Television services of RTK in Kosovo transmitted through Transmission Network Terrestrial in Kosovo (KTTN), which reaches approximately 80% of the population, and in satellite transmission for compatriots living abroad, as well as other Albanians who live and make vacations in regional states, in those of Europe, and those who live across the Atlantic.

Establishing a balance between the freedom of the media and the viewers-listeners, meaning the public, also it should be a priority of RTK. Determination of rules, foremost it is the duty of every media, therefore, RTK, set standards, which they are more ethical rules for the creation of the program rather than dealing with legal rules.

Keywords: Ethics, Media, Program, RTK, Standards, Service, Broadcast, Broadcaster

Introduction

RTK began its activity with just two hours program, to expand into four, and to reach a daily program of 20 hours. With the expansion of broadcasting to 20 hours, new programs appeared, empowering the journalism of daily and weekly news and expanding further the program. In this way was created the proper space in order to cover more live events, including all sessions of the Transitional Council of Kosovo and Kosovo's new Assembly. Should be emphasized, that the television reported on all the elections that were organized, taking correctness into consideration and giving to all political entities an equal time, regardless of their ethnicity or party ideology. This correctness of RTK was confirmed and by the reports of OSCE on Media Monitoring.

1. Broadcasting activity of RTK

Through the years, RTK continued its activity, with the only purpose and goal: to achieve the program objectives of the public broadcaster¹³⁶, by inserting a variety of programs, always taking into consideration that they should be built on the basis and the basic principles of the public broadcaster, and enabling a wide program selection interesting to the public. Moving through the years, RTK consolidated the programming scheme, enriching certain segments, and 65% of the overall program was local production. Only during 2002, were broadcasted 6935 hours of program (including and the retransmissions), which approximately 1750 hours of them were live program from the studios and

¹³⁶ About adequacy of the programs, see also: Pope, J. Michael e D. Daniels, B. K. Spiker. Organizational Communication, approaches and trends. Page 38

autoreportage. But this program slightly modified because of the lack of rights for satellite broadcasting, it is also broadcasted on satellite channel¹³⁷. In 2002 starts the Educational Program, starts the new edition of the news (INFO), increase the number of the documentary and children's programs, strengthened the entertainment programs, musical and humorous, etc..

A number of educational and children's programs were realized thanks to a contract with the EBU. Year 2004 was challenging for all Kosovo. In March had interethnic riots between Albanians and local Serbs. So the television of Kosovo covered these events¹³⁸, as well as October's general elections.

According to some surveys, the Television of Kosovo maintains the leading position in the Kosovo media, and that as in the reliability also in the visibility¹³⁹. During 2005 became the design and realization of a broad plan for staff training, mainly of the journalistic and editorial, which influenced in the overall raising of the job quality. During 2007 the programs of Culture, Education, Documentary and that one for Children, mark good results. RTK even in 2008 and 2009 continued with broadcasting new and qualitative emissions and programs, always having in mind to satisfy the public. It is worth mentioning that in 2010 are also marked new achievements in Information Program, as well as in the Entertainment Program, Musical and Sporty, but not in the Cultural, Educational or in that for the Children. But we must not forget that during this year were recovered organizational deficiencies. In 2013 starts the second program of RTK, respectively the RTK's television channel in Serbian language. Meanwhile in 2014 started also two other channels, RTK 3 and RTK 4. One of these informative, and the other for educational, scientific and cultural programs. So, now RTK has three television channels and two radios. Kosovo Radio and Blue Sky Radio.

1.2 Programming Policy

Since, as the 2001/13 regulation of UNMIK, as the draft for RTK, and as the approved law for RTK, this media was obliged to set balance between the programs of general interest and specific programs, which serve the needs of viewers, necessarily, it should make a combination of news program, sports, programs based on facts, programs of current affairs, various documentaries, debates¹⁴⁰ and discussions, cultural program, programs for children and teenagers, musical programs, entertainment, films, series and humor. After all, this is actually and the aim of RTK – to inform, to clarify and entertain.

In this aspect, the obligation of this media house was and still is to provide public broadcasting service among others also for relaxing the public, whether they are sporting events, musical or humoristic series. With the help of the European Broadcasters Union (EBU) has provided the most of these programs for free.

The television services of RTK in Kosovo are being broadcasted via Kosovo Terrestrial Transmission Network (KTTN), which reaches approximately 80% of the population, and in satellite for the fellows who live abroad, as well as for other Albanians who live and work in region's countries, for those of Europe, also for those living across the Atlantic. RTK has undoubtedly cared to compile a programming scheme, interesting and accessible to the public. A scheme that maybe made the RTK the most viewed by the other televisions in Kosovo.

2 Professional standards and ethical principles of journalism

Given the fact that the media has a significant role in society and television is among the most influential media, the placement of rules as well as definition of dimensions and implications of the right to information and the freedom of speech, has been, is and should even remain an essential task

¹³⁷ More about the impact from abroad, see: Pope, J. Michael. e Tom D. Daniels, Barry K. Spiker. Organizational Communication, approaches and trends. Page 133

¹³⁸ Unmik/Reg. Regulation 2001/13 of UNMIK, on the establishment of Radio Television of Kosovo Article 1.3.d

¹³⁹ For the right of programs selection, see: McNair, Brian. Introduction to political communication. Page 30

¹⁴⁰ See: www.rtklive.com. The annual report of RTK in 2007

of each media. Therefore, the placement of a balance between the media's freedom and the freedom of the viewers-listeners, means public, it was also one of the priorities of Radio Television Kosovo. Bearing in mind the fact that only the experience wasn't enough, but was also required a great courage of the working staff, starting from the terrain journalist during the collection of information and up to the editors and the management staff. The definition of rules, first of all is the duty of every media, therefore RTK, being one of the national broadcasters in Kosovo, it should define the starting points and the supports from where they should begin, and up to where their right reaches, and define where begins and ends the right of the public.

These standards are moreover ethical rules for creation of the program than dealing with legal rules. And since its roots are in its professional knowledge and its healthy self-regulation shaped by this knowledge, they make the public media more serious and dedicated to the work it does.

Always, taking into account the ethics of journalism, the Board of RTK's Directors in a session held on January 25, 2005 approved Professional Standards¹⁴¹ with full conviction that either the spread of information or the expression of free speech should not be prohibited, because censorship's forms are nowhere tolerated in Europe, but neither the unreasonable labeling or information that are not covered by evidence and facts. Hence, professionalism, fairness and objectivity have taken place in the document, which the Board of RTK's Directors has approved.

This document includes the duties, responsibilities, rights and obligations of RTK's journalists and editors, on the basis of which they get in charge during their profession. And secondly, as such, this document is a guide to information workers, including and their behavior while performing the assigned duties. By approving this very important document for RTK, this media intends to walk uphold the most popular media in Europe and in the world, by fulfilling the essential conditions of information, of which the most important are: his impartiality and balance. Because, medias are institutions established with a certain purpose, which is information as fast as possible, also fair and accurate, and so automatically implies and the role that these institutions must have.

From this group of information institutions, is not excluded either this media institution, respectively, RTK. Because as a comprehensive media, in the entire territory of Kosovo, and abroad it, plays and important role for society.

Given the fact, that in this millennium, Europe does not accept any form of censorship and self-censorship, willingly and unwillingly these standards should be embodied in the belief that ethics, professionalism, justice and objectivity, should be the guiding principles for a public broadcaster.

It is almost normal, as the endorsers of this document have foreseen, that the approved ethical principles should be open to amendments, for additions and improvements during the future work and practice, which, leaves hope that these principles will lead RTK towards a new era of impartial and balanced journalism. Since Television, represents one of the most characteristic media, which except picture and sound, represents and movements, which means that citizens, respectively, viewers are informed by sound and images presented specially for them, can be freely said that a media like this has also its own characteristics that distinguish it from the other medias. Otherwise from written medias, this has the characteristic to present visual images for all the events, for which first of all is interested the institution, meaning Television, and then citizens wherever they live and follow it. Because in the end, as radio and television have been created or established in order to spread their waves for the good or the general interest of public.

Therefore, this document has been compiled in order to help journalists, editors and all other employees of RTK, so they can perform their work with honor and principles of professionalism, as well of journalistic ethics.

Final Reviews

RTK began its activity with an only two hours program and one television channel. With time, was expanded both in quantity and quality, increasing the number of broadcasting hours per day and the number of television channels. Thus, in 2013 RTK added a channel specifically for the Serbian minority, which means was added RTK 2 and several months later, in 2014, RTK also added two TV channels: RTK 3 and RTK 4. The first was mented for information while the second was for educational, scientific and cultural. In the meantime, RTK's television services in Kosovo were

¹⁴¹ See: The Document of RTK : Professional standards and ethical principles of journalism

broadcasted and are being broadcasted via Kosovo Terrestrial Transmission Network (KTTN), which reaches approximately 80% of the population, and in satellite for the fellows who live abroad, as well as for other Albanians who live and work in region's countries, for those of Europe, also for those living across the Atlantic.

Given the fact about the role of media in society, RTK was imposed the need to place rules as well as definition of dimensions and implications of the right to information and the freedom of speech, therefore decided professional standards, in the form of ethical rules with full conviction that either the spread of information or the expression of free speech would be freely broadcasted, because censorship's forms are nowhere tolerated in Europe, but neither the unreasonable labeling or information that are not covered by evidence and facts. Hence, professionalism, fairness and objectivity are those which have taken place in the document approved by the Board of RTK's Directors, which is called professional and ethical Standards.

This document, includes the duties, responsibilities, rights and obligations of RTK's journalists and editors, on the basis of which they get in charge during their profession. The approved ethical principles have remained open to amendments, for additions and improvements during the future work and practice, and which leaves hope that these principles will lead RTK towards a new era of impartial and balanced journalism.

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