

Statement Regarding the Denial to Provide Broadcast License to “A1+” TV Company

April 2, 2002

On April 2, the National Commission on Television and Radio passed a decision, recognizing “Sharm” company the winner of the competition for the broadcast license on 37th UHF of Yerevan. This decision actually deprived one of the best TV companies of the country, “A1+”, of its air.

We voice our concern with the fact that “A1+” is being ousted from the broadcasting sphere, a fact which may impoverish the TV air of the country, restrict the diversity of information and opportunities to express various opinions. We are convinced that for the adoption of an objective decision the Commission was to take into account the activities of “A1+” during the past years, the contribution made by the TV company in the establishment of freedom of speech and diversity of opinion in Armenia.

We believe that the decision made on April 2 politicizes the issue and may become a precedent for silencing and intimidation of the unwanted media and insist that the issue should be viewed purely from a professional angle.

Obviously, the situation is the consequence of the imperfect legislation allowing the judgmental formation of the National Commission on Television and Radio and reshaping the broadcasting sphere, ignoring the interests of the acting and established TV companies. This point is confirmed also by the results of competition for the 35th UHF, making “Shoghakat” company the winner, while leaving out “Noyan Tapan”.

We will support all the legal actions of the TV companies to protect their rights and insist on the necessity for the legislative amendments.

Yerevan Press Club

“Internews” public organization