

Statement Regarding the Competition to Fill in the Vacancies in the Council of Public Television and Radio Company of Armenia

February 3, 2005

By a decree of the RA President of January 20, 2005 a competition was announced to fill in the vacancies in the Council of Public Television and Radio Company of Armenia. February 1 was the deadline for the application submission. We did not make a statement during the application process not to interfere with it. Presently we think it necessary to reinstate our stance on the mechanism of broadcasting regulatory bodies' formation.

We state that the RA Law "On Television and Radio" and the practice of its implementation, in particular the present competition, does not correspond to Armenia's commitment to the Council of Europe about the transformation of state broadcasting into public and to international standards.

Amendments to the Law "On Television and Radio", adopted on December 3, 2003, according to which the vacancies in the Council of Public TV and Radio Company (as well as in the National Commission on Television and Radio) are filled by a competition, are allegedly stemming from the CoE experts' recommendations. Yet, even at that time, having compared the proposals of the experts and the amendments made, we noted that the latter ones do not in any way comply with the essence and purpose of the recommendations to ensure the greatest transparency of regulatory bodies formation. In particular, the Law does not stipulate the procedure for forming the competition commission, leaving it completely at the discretion of the President of the republic. If previously the head of the state directly appointed the members of the Council, he now appoints them out of the winners determined by the commission he had formed.

We qualify the amendments to the Law and the competition announced basing on them to be an imitation of democratic procedures and will keep insisting on the need for real reforms.

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