

Statement Regarding the Reform of Broadcasting Legislation

June 15, 2011

In 2010 the RA Human Rights Defender formed a working group (WG) on reforming the broadcast legislation, regulating the process of switching from analogue to digital broadcast in Armenia. The group aimed at amending the RA Law “On Television and Radio”, proceeding from the numerous critical appraisals. In February 2011, the preliminary draft version developed by us – several NGOs – was adopted by the working group to serve as a basis for further improvements.

On May 31, 2011 the draft law was submitted to the RA National Assembly supplemented by the comments and suggestions from the WG members, also by the conclusions delivered by international experts regarding the preliminary draft version. Simultaneously, this indicated the end of the WG activities, which was formed to address the most urgent problems in the field.

We, WG members-representatives of journalistic NGOs, express our concern with the current version of the draft, considering it imperfect, and the shutdown of the WG activities – premature. The draft contains a number of important clauses that were not properly addressed and still require a thorough discussion and analysis. Suggestions and recommendations provided by the experts, including the feedback from the Council of Europe and OSCE, were not considered in full and completely.

Such a situation questions the initial key objective of our activities, which is to contribute to the adoption of a perfectly worked out law by the RA National Assembly.

As the co-authors of the preliminary draft version, we state that we continue our activities over the improvement of the draft and in future we are intended to submit it to the RA National Assembly in a separate package. Given this fact, we would like to request the NA Standing Committee on Science, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport to postpone any possible discussion on the draft.

Members of the Working Group:

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