

## **Statement regarding the draft law on amendments to the RA Law “On Television and Radio” by RA Minister of Justice**

**13 December 2019, Yerevan**

On 11 December the RA Ministry of Justice officially posted on the website [www.e-draft.am](http://www.e-draft.am) the draft Law on the Amendments to the RA Law on Television and Radio, which envisages inter alia a right for the Public Television to broadcast advertisements for up to 5 minutes within one broadcast hour.

We, the undersigned organisations, hereby state that this is an entirely unjustified step. The issue of whether the Public Television and Radio Company sponsored from the state budget must have access to the advertising market had always been resolved by the former authorities arbitrarily depending on the political expediency and very concrete business group interests rather than credible calculations and serious arguments. There is no ground to assume that the current initiative is driven by the public demand while the draft itself raises a number of issues with the relevant expert structures.

We note that this is not the first case that the revolutionary government neglects the need to consult the expert community before adopting important decisions and developing draft legislation.

Considering the justifications attached to the draft law as unacceptable and biased, we demand that:

The Ministry of Justice removes the document in question from circulation and holds an open discussion on the issue of advertising by the Public Television;

The Television and Radio Commission expresses a public position on whether in addition to budgetary allocations the public broadcaster needs to have access to the advertising market;

The Board of the Public Television and Radio Company puts forward additional and more convincing explanations on insufficient budgetary allocations and urgency of broadcasting advertisements, as well as provides clarifications as to why these issues and legislative amendments are being agreed exclusively with the authorities in blatant neglect of the opinions of other stakeholders.

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