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PRESS RELEASE

Opaque Procedure to Change of Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services

The Media Development Center (MDC) finds the latest Draft-Law to supplement and amend the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (LAAMS), proposed by the Government, is yet another attempt, in an opaque and urgent procedures, for behind-closed-doors interventions in a law the directly concerns the freedom of information and freedom of the media in the country.

MDC believes it is the highest time for the Government to stop ignoring the media and journalistic organizations and associations when intervening in laws and other legislation that directly concern the media community and the general public. The latest attempt to intervene with changes in the list of authorized nominators for members of the Programming Council of MRT (the public broadcasting services) which should replace the existing provision listing the majority journalist association to introduce a second association, without prior consultations with the media community and proper public debate and consultations on the proposed changes, is another indicator of Government's approach to the media and media professionals. At the same time, the question arises why the proposed changes should be conducted in an urgent, and not in regular adoption procedure in the Assembly.

MDC would like to remind the Government of the obligation it accepted publicly to propose, within six months from the adoption of the media legislation, changes in the financing of the public broadcasting service that would increase its independence and autonomy.

MDC believes that only a full financial and editorial independence would transform MRT into an independent and transparent public broadcasting service that will truly protect the interests of the citizens and the public in the Republic of Macedonia.