

OVERVIEW OF FUNDING METHODS AND FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS OF BROADCASTERS AS SET BY MEDIA LAWS

MACEDONIA

Article 70 of Macedonian law states that electronic media shall be financed through «execution of own activities», from donators and «other sources». The following articles specify who, and how much, pays TV subscription (in the amount of 2,5% of the average monthly net salary in the Republic during the preceding three months). The subscription amount is fixed by the Broadcasting Council based on published statistical data on the amount of salaries. The Law even specifies that the subscription is to be collected through the electricity bills, and also stipulates a fee for vehicle tuner owners.

The sum of the collected subscriptions is distributed in the following manner (Article 77): 61% to public services for creation and broadcasting of programs of interest for the country, 16.5% for construction, maintenance and use of basic broadcasting network, 7.5% for equipment for public broadcasting service of Macedonia, 5% for local public services, 10% for creation and performance of program of general interest on commercial stations or independent productions.

Article 79 states that public services, both on republic and local levels, are to be financed from a special fund in the budget of the republic or local authorities «as well as from other sources stipulated by the law.»

Article 80 states that the financing of commercial media companies is based on the commercial program and advertisements, from funds based on agreements with the company clients «as well as from other sources stipulated by the law». The following article allows the companies also the profit made based on own audio and visual production, organization of concerts and other events, and so on.

Macedonian law stipulates two types of broadcasters: republic and local public services and commercial stations. Individual foreign companies are allowed to have 25% share in the ownership of commercial TV and radio stations, whereas in the event of joining of several foreign companies, their maximum share in the ownership of a station must not exceed 49% of total capital.

The Law does not stipulate the exact amount of fees for concessions but implies that the Agency is to fix them at the time of opening public competition for granting concessions, the amount of fines being fixed by this Law, however.

Article 14, describing what a public competition for granting of concessions must comprise, mentions the amount and methods of payment of fees without specifying the amount in paragraph 3, point 4.

The Agency fixes the fee amount based on the total population in the service zone, which is a general principle in all countries. Thus broadcasters with national coverage in Macedonia pay the annual fee amounting to EUR 41,420; those with Skopje coverage EUR 9,960; and those covering Tetovo (which is an example of local coverage) EUR 6,210. Radio stations covering the area of Skopje pay an annual fee of EUR 4,830. 41% of the total collected amount of concession fees goes to the Government budget and 59% to the Telecommunications Administration.

Article 85, listing violations for which fines are stipulated in the amounts ranging from 100,000 to 300,000 denars (EUR 1,609-4,827) for legal entities to 30,000 to 50,000 denars (EUR 483-805) for responsible persons (in the legal entity), lists broadcasting without license in paragraph 1, point 1. Article 86 stipulates fines ranging from 30,000 to 100,000 denars (EUR 483-1,609).