



NGOS NEGATIVELY ASSESS THE REFUSAL OF THE TV COMPANY “MAESTRO” TO PLACE A SOCIAL ADVERTISEMENT

We, the undersigned organizations, negatively assess the refusal of the TV Company “Maestro” to place a social advertisement prepared by the Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association, which aims to raise public awareness regarding disadvantages of early marriages.

The possible reason why the TV Company “Maestro” refused to place the social advertisement were ‘the events developed recently’ between the “Studio Maestro” Ltd. and the Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association (*see the attachment*). In particular, the TV Company “Maestro” refused to fulfil the obligation provided for by legislation because just a few days earlier GYLA responded to the fact of termination of labour

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GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



relations between the TV Company and its 32 employees and assessed this act as groundless.

The legislation obliges broadcasters to allot at least 90 seconds every 3 hours to a social advertisement submitted for placement free of charge and without discrimination. Notably, a negative attitude to an author of a social advertisement does not exempt a broadcaster from fulfilling an obligation imposed by law. A social advertisement aims to raise public awareness about important issues and its placement may not be refused on the ground stated by the TV Company "Maestro". In addition, the problem of early marriages in Georgia is one of the acute problems. Both forced marriages and engagements are common in Georgia. Low public awareness and inefficient response are the main causes of this problem. Therefore, it is important that media pays special attention to this matter, because media plays an especially significant role in terms of raising public awareness. It is regrettable that the management of the TV Company has, on the one hand, a wrong understanding of media and, on the other hand, of the role of a social advertisement and its function in society. Hence, GYLA will appeal to the Georgian National Communications Commission against the refusal of the TV Company to fulfil the obligation imposed by legislation.

At the same time, we call on the management of the TV company "Maestro" to act in accordance with legislative norms and take into consideration the role of media in a democratic society, and broadcast the social advertisement submitted by the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association.

In addition, we, the undersigned organizations, reaffirm our willingness to continue constructive cooperation with the TV company "Maestro" and protect the public interests of both present and former employees of the TV company "Maestro" and the audience.

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association

Transparency International Georgia

International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy

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Media Support Fund

Union "Safari"

Media Club

Anti-Violence Network of Georgia

Human Rights Center

Partnership for Human Rights

Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics

Women's Initiatives Supporting Group

Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC)

Civil Development Agency (CiDA)

Article 42 of the Constitution

Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters