



**Broadcasting Authority Directive on Programmes and Advertisements Broadcast during period 11<sup>th</sup> April to 28<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

It has come to the notice of the Broadcasting Authority that certain broadcasters and others involved in the broadcasting media, are giving a very restricted interpretation to the Broadcasting Authority Directive on Programmes and Advertisements broadcast during period 11<sup>th</sup> April to 28<sup>th</sup> May 2011 issued by the same Authority on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2011.

Contrary to the views expressed in certain sections of the media, the Directive (issued in exercise of Article 15, Chapter 350 of the Laws of Malta) was never intended to restrict discussion on matters which are not of a controversial nature.

The Broadcasting Authority wishes to emphasise that all stations are duty bound, by the "Licence to Broadcast" which they hold, to respect the impartiality regulations when dealing with any aspect of political, industrial controversy or current public policy. There is no doubt about the May 28<sup>th</sup> Consultative Referendum on the issue of divorce being current public policy, and consequently the Broadcasting Authority is bound by law to issue such a directive.

It must be stated, however, that Paragraph 3(3) of the directive refers to "marriage or family matters" only when these are brought into discussion in the context of the divorce issue, which is the basic subject of the Consultative Referendum.

The Broadcasting Authority has never had any intention of using draconian powers or restricting freedom of speech. As required by the Constitution of Malta and by the Broadcasting legislation, it shall, however, be using all reasonable means to ensure that the discussion on the issue of divorce in the broadcasting media respects the rules of balance and impartiality.

11<sup>th</sup> April 2011