

SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION 350.14

REQUIREMENTS AS TO STANDARDS AND PRACTICE APPLICABLE TO NEWS BULLETINS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMMES

17th October, 2008

GOVERNMENT NOTICE 896 of 2008.

The title of these requirements is the Requirements as to Standards and Practice applicable to News Bulletins and Current Affairs Programmes. Citation.

SECTION 1

Introduction

1. Preamble

1.1 The Broadcasting Authority is the legal guardian over the impartiality and accuracy of news and current affairs programmes in terms of article 119 of the Constitution of Malta as well as the Broadcasting Act of 1991, as amended, now Chapter 350 of the Laws of Malta.

1.2 Radio and television broadcasters are required to provide news and current affairs programmes that should be presented with due accuracy.

1.3 The Authority has to ensure that a broadcaster preserves due impartiality in respect of matters of political or industrial controversy or current public policy.

1.4 The right for private and family life and the right of freedom of expression and information should be preserved and respected.

1.5 The Broadcasting Authority must seek to ensure that the provisions of this document are consistent with the principles of the Constitution and applicable legal instruments.

1.6 These Requirements as to Standards and Practice have been made by the Broadcasting Authority in virtue of article 20(3) of the Broadcasting Act, Chapter 350 of the Laws of Malta.

SECTION 2

Definitions and Interpretations

2. Definitions and Interpretations

2.1 News

2.1.1 The sole criterion for the inclusion of any item in a news bulletin is its news value. News can be defined as tidings, new information or fresh information. News values usually cited include: timelines, proximity, prominence, magnitude, impact, conflict and oddity. As such, a news item which is essentially a

*REQUIREMENTS AS TO STANDARDS AND PRACTICE
APPLICABLE TO NEWS BULLETINS AND
CURRENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMMES*

2 | **S.L.350.14**

repetition or simply constitutes a rehash of a news item already featured in a previous edition of a news bulletin cannot be justified for inclusion in a news bulletin.

2.1.2 A broadcaster may produce news items about any subject or issue he/she chooses. This freedom of choice is subject to the fulfilment of the obligations to ensure fairness and respect for truth.

2.1.3 This notwithstanding, comments are considered to be admissible as long as:

- i. they are directly connected with the unfolding story;
- ii. they are accurate, factual and ethical;
- iii. they are balanced; and
- iv. depending on the nature of the news item, informed opinions are sought.

2.1.4 It is the responsibility of the Head of News to decide what constitutes news value.

2.2 Public Interest

2.2.1 Public interest is not to be confined within narrow limits. Whenever a matter is such as to affect people at large, so that they may be legitimately interested in, or concerned about, what is going on, or what may happen to them or others, then it is a matter of public interest on which everyone is entitled to make fair comment.

2.2.2 Any act that relies upon a defence of public interest must be proportional to the actual interest served. Examples of how the public interest may be served by the media include:

- i. detecting or exposing crime or a serious misdemeanour;
- ii. protecting public health and safety;
- iii. preventing the public from being misled by some statement or action of an individual or organisation;
- iv. exposing significant incompetence in public office.

2.2.3 The involvement of minors and other vulnerable persons (such as the elderly, disabled persons, etc.) requires special attention so as to provide for their protection and safety. When minors are involved broadcasters should treat their physical, mental and emotional health as being of paramount importance. News editors should demonstrate an exceptional public interest to override the normally paramount interest of these persons.

2.2.4 The onus shall be upon the journalist and broadcaster concerned to justify any departure from the requirements indicated in this document on the grounds of public interest.

2.3 Current Affairs

2.3.1 For the purposes of this document, "Current Affairs" means a programme which contains an explanation and/or analysis

of current events and issues, including material dealing with political or industrial controversy or with public policy. Programmes should offer viewers and listeners an intelligent and informed account of issues that enables them to form their own views. This is achieved by current affairs programming which examines in depth the background of events, providing information, expert analysis, informed comment and open discussion.

2.4 Broadcaster

2.4.1 A broadcaster is any person or company licensed in terms of the Broadcasting Act to broadcast by radio or television. The broadcaster shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions of this document by the station's staff, including journalists, editors, producers and presenters.

2.5 Head of News

2.5.1 Without prejudice to the editor's responsibility under the Press Act, any reference in this document to the Head of News means the person entrusted with the legal responsibility for the newsroom of the broadcasting station concerned. Such person shall be answerable for any decisions taken concerning the content of news bulletins and /or current affairs programmes transmitted by the said station.

2.6 Minor

2.6.1 For the purposes of the provisions of this document, a "minor" is a person who has not yet reached the age of 18.

2.7 Public Capacity

2.7.1 Public capacity includes persons holding public offices, public figures and other persons who although not public officers are in the public limelight such as chairpersons and members of public corporations and government owned companies, officials of trade unions, employers associations and other similar organisations, and Church authorities.

SECTION 3

Integrity and Responsibility of the Broadcaster

3. Integrity and Responsibility of the Broadcaster

3.1 Journalists and broadcasters must guard their own integrity and credibility in order to be able to act freely and independently of forces which may exert undue influence and impair free and balanced judgement.

3.2 Officials in a political party should not be involved in news-gathering, production and presentation of news.

3.3 Sponsorship should never influence editorial activity, contents and presentation. Journalists must not accept commissions or give in to these seeking publicity for commercial purposes. Editorial favours must not be promised in return for advertisements.

*REQUIREMENTS AS TO STANDARDS AND PRACTICE
APPLICABLE TO NEWS BULLETINS AND
CURRENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMMES*

4 [S.L.350.14

3.4 Errors must be quickly acknowledged and publicity corrected.

SECTION 4

News Bulletins

4. Accuracy and Impartiality

4.1 Opinion should be clearly distinguished from fact.

As such, opinions and comments on news items should only follow an accurate report on the facts and should respect the requirements listed in sub-paragraph 2.1.3 above.

4.2 The Broadcasting Act demands that the Broadcasting Authority secures due impartiality on the part of a broadcaster in its news bulletins so far as matters of political or industrial controversy or current public policy are concerned.

4.3 A broadcaster should ensure that principal divergent points are reflected in a single news bulletin when the issue involved is of a current and active controversy. Editorial judgement can be used when it is not possible to include all views in a single news bulletin.

4.4 It shall not be permissible for the broadcaster to claim that news bulletins on other channels will ensure that opposing views will be heard. A news bulletin should consist of a mix of active and passive reports. It should avoid looking like a notice board and, more importantly, as if it forms part of an organisation's propaganda machine.

4.5 In dealing with major matters of controversy, a broadcaster must ensure that justice is done to a full range of divergent views and perspectives during the period in which the controversy is active.

4.6 Regarding matters of political or industrial controversy or current public policy, the Broadcasting Act requires that any news, given in whatever form, must be presented with due accuracy and impartiality.

4.7 A news bulletin should comply with the following standards:

- i. news should be presented with accuracy and without bias;
- ii. news should not be editorial;
- iii. news should not be selected for the purpose of furthering or hindering either side of a controversial public issue; and
- iv. news should not be designed by the beliefs, opinions or desires of the broadcaster or others engaged in its preparation or delivery.

4.8 A news item has to be factual or at the very least based on fact. Conjectures, distortions, remarks, opinions, judgements or convictions should not be allowed whether they are termed as

comments or opinions and whether they are related to the item in question or not simply because they can - and usually do - mislead the audience and lead to confusion as to whether the so -called comment/opinion is what the station/newscaster thinks or whether it resulted from the fact being reported.

4.9 Editorial opinion shall be clearly labelled as such and kept entirely distinct from regular broadcasts of news bulletins.

4.10 Combinations of semi-fabricated news items, without care for accuracy solely aimed for partisan propaganda shall be prohibited.

SECTION 5

Location Reporting

5. Location Reporting

5.1 When making on location reports journalists shall be allowed the facility and freedom to make a remark, a description or a professional unbiased judgement of a happening, or a note of interpretation to further illustrate / enhance the presentation of a breaking story provided that the reporting does not breach the standards and practice requirements set out in this document or in other codes, whether of the Authority or otherwise, aimed at journalists.

5.2 Location reporting calls for due regard for accuracy, absence of bias, non-intermingling of news and editorial comment, avoidance of distortion and sensationalism, respect for privacy and avoidance of conflict of interest.

5.3 If a reporter expresses a professional, journalistic judgement, such judgement must be recognized as perceptive and fair and not as a personal opinion. The audience should not be able to gauge the personal views of the presenters and reporters on controversial issues of public policy.

SECTION 6

Reconstruction Material

6. Reconstruction Material

6.1 Any simulation of an event in a television news bulletin or news flash should either be subtitled, indicating clearly that the pictures are not actual and there can be no reasonable possibility that it could be taken to be original footage. When using footage, the broadcaster should clearly indicate whether it is fresh or archive material. Certain techniques, such as running footage in slow motion or repeating the images, must be used sparingly and only when required to stress a point or highlight a given action. Also, respect must be shown to the subject in such footage; unsavoury human practices/habits should not be screened at all, let alone in slow motion and/or repeatedly.

6.2 By reconstruction material is meant only those cases of dramatisation in the news or in a current affairs programme which depict in a dramatised fashion facts which would have actually

occurred but it does not include allegations concerning anybody or hypothetical events. For instance, evidence tendered in court can be dramatised provided that it is factual as to the evidence tendered by the witness. Dramatisation in the news and in current affairs programmes which is not factual is prohibited.

6.3 When a programme is broadcast in the Maltese language the word ‘Drammatizzazzjoni’ should be screened whilst in the case of programmes broadcast in the English language the words ‘Dramatised Reconstruction’ should appear on screen.

SECTION 7

Media Releases

7. Media Releases

7.1 Media releases should be evaluated on the merits of their news value. Moreover, rather than just quoting verbatim from media releases, the broadcaster should seek that the person/organisation issuing such release appears on camera or on sound.

7.2 Where a media release is issued in reaction to an earlier event or statement which had not been previously reported by the station concerned due to its lack of news value, it shall be the duty of the said station to provide an account of the original release together with the reaction thereto.

SECTION 8

Rights of Respect and Privacy

8. Rights of Respect and Privacy

8.1 Everyone is entitled to respect for his or her private and family life. People in the news and persons holding office in public life are entitled to protection of their privacy except in those cases where their private life may have an effect on their public life.

8.2 There are occasions when the individual’s right to respect for private and family life must be balanced against the public interest.

8.3 When covering events in public places, journalists, editors and producers must exercise due diligence when reporting on statements or action heard or noticed while ensuring the individual’s right of privacy is respected.

8.4 The subject’s permission must be obtained when using material from closed-circuit television cameras of which the individual is unlikely to have been aware. However, when it is in the public interest to use footage such as in the case of the exposure of crime or gross negligence in the management of public affairs, then the subject’s permission is not required.

8.5 The news service provider should consider carefully whether unfairness to the person/ persons portrayed results from re-use of news material in later and different programme contexts.

8.6 Then individual’s right to privacy at times of bereavement and extreme distress must be respected. Particular

care should also be taken where personal tragedy is involved.

8.7 Generally, close-up of victims should be avoided, if necessity does not demand otherwise, such as to help police identification. The names of the victims, before next-of-kin are informed, should not as a rule be broadcast.

8.8 Scenes of human suffering and people in distress are often an integral part of news reportage of natural disasters, accidents or human violence. Before presenting such scenes a producer needs to balance the wish to serve the needs of truth against the risk of sensationalism. A prior announcement should be made to warn that the subsequent scenes might not be suitable for viewing by children or impressionable persons.

8.9 Persons accused of criminal matters should not be projected as if they are already found guilty. Trial by the media before any court judgement is delivered should be avoided at all times. Care should be taken to avoid broadcasting repetitive footage that might prejudice the accused's right to a fair trial. When reporting on arraignment, the principle of presumption of innocence must be fully respected. The same treatment meted out to persons on arraignment shall likewise be meted out when judgement is pronounced.

8.10 The location of a person's home or family should not normally be revealed unless strictly relevant to the behaviour under investigation.

8.11 Filming and recording in institutions

8.11.1 When permission is received to film or record material in an institution, which has regular dealings with the public, but which would not normally be accessible to cameras without such permission, it is very likely that the material will include shots of individuals who are themselves incidental, rather than central, figures in the programme.

8.11.2 The question arises as to how far and in what conditions such people retain a right to refuse to allow material in which they appear to be broadcast. As a general rule, no obligation to seek agreement arises as to when the appearance of the persons shown is incidental and they are clearly random and anonymous members of the general public.

8.11.3 When their appearance is not incidental, where they are not random and anonymous or where, though unnamed, they are shown in particularly sensitive situations (for example as psychiatric patients, prison inmates or disabled persons), individual consents to use this material should be sought.

8.11.4 When by reason of disability or infirmity a person is not in a position either to give or to withhold agreement, permission to use the material should be sought from the next of kin or from the person responsible for his/her care.

8.11.5 Any exception is justifiable when this is manifestly in the public interest.

8.12 Filming on police operations

8.12.1 When permission is given to film police or similar official operations of any kind, involving members of the public in other than public places (e.g. visits to homes under warrant, raids on licensed premises, etc) it is the responsibility of the producer or senior crew-member to stop filming or to leave premises if they are asked to do so by persons in authority.

8.13 Fairness to innocent parties

8.13.1 Where innocent parties are central figures in any news bulletin, special care should be taken not to present items concerning serious crimes, a tragic event or disaster in an unfair light. Arguments of public interest would be relevant, for example, where questions of a possible miscarriage of justice arise or where major legal, social or moral principles are at issue.

8.14 Hidden microphones and cameras

8.14.1 The use of hidden microphones and cameras should only be considered where it is necessary to the credibility and authenticity of the story. The use of hidden recording techniques can be unfair to those recorded as well as an infringement of their privacy. In such a case, the journalist must always seek the explicit consent of the Head of News.

8.14.2 When recording does take place secretly, the words or images recorded should serve an overriding public interest that justify:

- i. the decision to gather the material
- ii. the actual recording
- iii. the broadcast

8.14.3 An unattended recording device should not be left on private property without the full and informed consent of the occupiers, unless seeking such permission might frustrate the investigation by the programme-producers of matters of overriding public interest.

8.14.4 The open and apparent use of cameras or recording devices on both public and private property, must be appropriate to the importance or nature of the story. The broadcaster should not intrude unnecessarily on private behaviour.

8.14.5 When broadcasting material is obtained secretly, whether in public or private property, the broadcaster should take care not to infringe the privacy of bystanders who may be caught inadvertently in the recording. The identity of innocent parties should be obscured. Material shot or recorded secretly by third parties, which becomes available to the broadcaster, should be treated in the same way.

8.14.6 The Broadcaster must keep full records, including the edited and unedited versions of secret recordings for the duration of ninety days after broadcasting date.

8.15. Broadcasting Rights of Reply

8.15.1 When broadcasting a right of reply, stations shall comply with the following mandatory requirements:

- i. a reply shall not normally exceed 180 seconds;
- ii. the reply shall be read as submitted without any station comments made within the actual text of the reply;
- iii. should the station wish to comment, it should do so after the entire right of reply is read out;
- iv. the station remains at liberty to edit the reply to ensure that it is not defamatory;
- v. the reply shall be broadcast within two days from its receipt and the same prominence should be given to it as that given to the original broadcast about which the reply has been requested;
- vi. the right of reply shall lapse after one month from the date of the original transmission.

8.15.2 Such requirements are without prejudice to article 21 of the Press Act.

SECTION 9

Violence in the News

9. Violence in the News

9.1 News Bulletins, like any other programming, fall under the requirements of family viewing and should be treated as such. However this should not restrict the range of different stories covered in any news bulletin or imply that some news events may not be properly and appropriately covered.

9.2 It is required that all news subjects are presented in a manner that takes account of the audience. In case of violent footage, the appropriate warnings are to be given well in advance.

9.3 Care should be taken when scenes of violence are repeated in succeeding news bulletins, at times when children would be watching.

SECTION 10

Children's Rights

10. Children's Rights

10.1 Particular consideration and prudence should be exercised in all cases concerning minors, whether interest therein is derived from private or public matters.

10.2 Where minors are or have been involved in police enquiries or court proceedings, particularly but not limited to sexual offences, special care needs to be taken to avoid any indication of the identity of the person.

10.3 Particular care needs to be taken when reporting sexual crimes within a family. Naming the accused and describing the crime can have the effect of identifying the victim. Giving

information about an accused person's address may contribute to the jigsaw, which identifies the victim.

SECTION 11

Promotional material in the News

11. Promotional material in the News

11.1 The source of promotional material supplied by or on behalf of official bodies, commercial companies or campaigning organisations should be briefly but clearly labelled on-air for a maximum duration of five seconds either in sound or vision.

11.2 Exceptions to this rule may be made where the material itself is very brief and in no sense promotes the supplier's interests. Material whose effect is clearly promotional should, however, be avoided, unless the organisation's activity is itself a subject of the news story.

11.3 In the case of items of a commercial nature, their inclusion shall be dependent on the items' intrinsic news value and not on the value of the advertiser's account with the station.

SECTION 12

Current Affairs Programming

12. Current Affairs

12.1 Broadcasters should aim to present current affairs programmes:

- i. in a way which allows informed public debate on substantial issues affecting the community;
- ii. to provide reasonable opportunities to present significant viewpoints when dealing with controversial issues of public importance;
- iii. of immediate relevance to the community, including interviews and commentary dealing in depth with news items.

As such, a series of current affairs programmes should be balanced with a diversity of topics, including topics of a social, cultural, educational, environmental, economic, industrial and political nature, as well as other subjects of general interest. Where the topics selected address issues of political or industrial controversy or of current public policy, the broadcaster is to ensure that, at least over a series of programmes, the selected topics adequately reflect the current debate affecting the whole political spectrum in the country.

12.2 The Broadcasting Act requirements about impartiality allow a series of programmes to be considered as a whole provided that when a single current affairs programme is not *per se* balanced, the legal requirement of impartiality may be discharged: (i) over two or more related programmes within the same series; (ii) where the broadcasts are transmitted within a reasonable period from each other; and (iii) when the broadcaster informs the viewers or

listeners during the first programme of the date of the subsequent programme wherein he/she intends to balance the first programme giving sufficient information as to date of programme, subject of the programme and proposed participants. For this purpose, a “series” means a number of current affairs programmes, broadcast in the same service, each one of which is clearly linked to the others, and which deals with the same or related issues.

12.3 The provisions of these Requirements which regulate News Bulletins shall apply also to current affairs programmes apart from section 7.

12.4 Apart from the matters specified in section 4.3 above, impartiality does not mean that balance is required in any simple mathematical sense or that equal time must be given to each divergent point of view. Journalists and producers do not have to be absolutely neutral on every controversial issue. They should nevertheless tackle evenhandedly with divergent points of view to supplement or create a democratic debate amongst contrasting ideas.

12.5 The choice of participants in research-led investigative journalism or a studio discussion will be determined by the need to be fair, balanced and knowledgeable on the subject matter. However, in a studio discussion participants are normally chosen with a view to reflect divergent viewpoints. Where the subject matter refers to an issue of political or industrial controversy or addresses public policy, this Requirement implies that participation in the programme should reflect a balanced and adequate representation of all the interested parties, political or otherwise. It also implies that the use of audiovisual material, including clips and features, in such programmes should reflect in a balanced manner the views of all the parties concerned. Where the programme involves the active participation of an audience, the audience selection process should, to the extent possible, ensure that the audience is composed of persons with different views.

SECTION 13

Interviews

13. Interviews

13.1 Interviews

13.1.1 Interviewees dealing with political or industrial controversy or current public policy should be made adequately aware of the format, subject matter and purpose of the programme to which they have been invited to contribute and the way in which their contribution is likely to be used. The broadcaster shall retain that part of the interview where s/he has sought the consent of the interviewee to record the interview. A station has to retain a recording of that interview for a period of three months from the date that the interview or part thereof is recorded. During these three months the Broadcasting Authority Chief Executive shall have the right to request the station to submit to him the recordings so that they can be verified and, should it be the case, to take the necessary measures if there is a lack of compliance with the

Requirements mentioned above in this paragraph.

13.1.2 Interviewees should also be informed of the identity and intended role of other proposed participants in the programme, as soon as the persons are known.

13.1.3 On occasion, proposed interviewees will be unable or unwilling to accept an invitation to participate in a programme. This need not cancel the programme. Reference to the absence of such a spokesperson should be referred in as detached and factual a manner as possible and the presenter should as far as practicable make known the absent interviewee's or his or her organisation's views on the subject under discussion, where known.

13.1.4 Where the subject consents to being interviewed for a different purpose from that covertly intended by the producers of a news programme, the use of such material without the subject's permission can only be justified if it is necessary in order to make an important point of public interest.

13.1.5 Impromptu interviews with public figures and people in the news are a normal and usually unproblematic part of news gathering. There are, however, occasions when a reporter confronts and records a potential interviewee without prior arrangement on private property or locations such as restaurants, churches and other places where the subject would reasonably expect personal privacy. The use of such interviews should however be generally a last resort and should be guided by two main aspects:

- i. the investigation involves crime or serious anti-social behaviour and/or
- ii. the subject so being interviewed has failed to respond to a repeated request to be interviewed, refused an interview on unreasonable grounds or has a history of such failure or refusal.

13.1.6 Particular care needs to be taken where the person approached is not the subject of the allegations, for example a relative, friend or associate, to avoid the risk of unwarranted invasion of their privacy.

13.2 Editing of Interviews

13.2.1 Impartiality and fairness also apply to the editing of interviews. Editing of recorded interviews must not be distorted as to create misrepresentation of the known view of the interviewee.

13.2.2 Interviews held on library tapes should be checked before use to see whether the views expressed are still valid, and where necessary captioned to show the date when the original interview was recorded.

13.3 Recorded Telephone Interviews

13.3.1 Interviews or conversations conducted by telephone should not normally be recorded for inclusion in a programme unless the interviewer has identified himself or herself as speaking on behalf of a licensee or a broadcaster, and has informed the

interviewee that the conversation is being recorded, and the interviewee has given consent to the use of the conversation in news bulletins or current affairs programmes. The broadcaster shall air that part of the interview where s/he has sought the consent of the interviewee to record the interview.

13.3.2 In investigative journalism, there may be occasions, such as those involving investigation of allegedly criminal or otherwise disreputable behaviour, when these normal requirements cannot be observed.

13.3.3 When, in the considered judgement of the journalist/producer, such a case arises, he or she must obtain the explicit consent of a broadcaster's most senior programme executive in the newsroom, before such material is broadcast in a programme.

SECTION 14

Discussion Programmes

14. Discussion Programmes

14.1 When the programme takes the form of a discussion, it is the presenter's duty to note that a public figure has been invited to participate and such person has declined the invitation. Whilst the presenter is obliged to inform his/her audience of the reason for such refusal, if known, the presenter shall not inform the audience that a person has declined an invitation as aforesaid if such person is not invited in a public capacity and in such case the presenter shall comply with the provisions of the last sentence of paragraph 13.1.3 above.

14.2 Any organisation or any person has the right to decline an invitation to participate in a programme but refusal to take part in a programme shall not automatically imply the cancellation of that programme. The reason is that cancellation would be equivalent to granting a right of veto over the particular subject. This would be inconsistent with the broadcasting services' duty to deal with important issues.

Note:

The enforceable provisions of this document regulating news bulletins, also apply to current affairs programmes. Likewise, the provisions of sections 13.2 and 13.3 of this document also apply to the production of news bulletins.

SECTION 15

Independent Productions

15. General Obligations of Independent Producers

15.1. Independent productions made for broadcasters must observe the same standards and practice requirements set out in the preceding parts of this document for in-house productions. Ultimate responsibility for the method and content of any material commissioned by a broadcaster rests with the said broadcaster.

SECTION 16

Contractual Obligation of Independent Producers

16. Contractual Obligation of Independent Producers

16.1 All contracts made by a broadcaster with an independent producer should include their obligation to observe the previous provisions of this document, of the Constitution, of the Broadcasting Act and of any other relevant law.

SECTION 17

The Public Service Broadcaster

17. Rules applicable to the Public Service Broadcaster

17.1 The rules in Sections 18 to 19 are not enforceable by the Broadcasting Authority but may be applied by the public service broadcaster.

SECTION 18

Impartiality of the Public Service Broadcaster

18. Impartiality of the Public Service Broadcaster

18.1 Producers of news and current affairs programmes should have no outside interests or commitments which could damage the public service broadcaster's reputation for impartiality, fairness and integrity.

SECTION 19

Presenters and Reporters primarily associated
with the Public Service Broadcaster

19. Presenters and Reporters primarily associated with the Public Service Broadcaster

19.1 Those known to the public primarily as presenters of, or reporters on, news programmes or programmes about current affairs broadcast on the public service broadcaster must be seen to be impartial. It is important that no off-air activity, including writing, the giving of interviews or the making of speeches, leads to any doubt about their objectivity on-air. If such presenters or reporters publicly express personal views off-air on controversial issues, then their on-air role may be severely compromised. It is crucial that in both their work with the public service broadcaster and in other non-public service broadcasting activities such as writing, speaking or giving interviews, they do not:

- i. state how they vote or express support for any political party;
- ii. express views for or against any policy which is a matter of current party political debate;
- iii. advocate any particular position on an issue of current public controversy or debate;
- iv. exhort a change in high profile public policy.

SECTION 20

Application of these Standards and Practice Requirements

20. Applicability of these Requirements

20.1 Unless otherwise provided in this document, these provisions apply to all broadcasters, whether they are television or radio, and to all news bulletins and current affairs programmes whether made by a broadcaster or by an independent production house for the said broadcaster.

SECTION 21

Editor for the purposes of these Requirements

21. Editor for the purposes of these Requirements

21.1 Each broadcasting station shall appoint an editor for the purposes of these Requirements.

21.2 The editor shall act as a compliance officer to ensure the due observation of the provisions of these standards and practice requirements.

21.3 Each broadcasting station shall notify the Authority of the name, surname and contact details of the said editor as well as of any changes in appointment to this position.
