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**EXTRACT FROM THE EXPERT JUDGMENT
OF MEDIA ETHICS OBSERVATORY
ON COMPLAINT BY ARZUMAN HARUTYUNIAN, PRESIDENT OF
AUDIO-VISUAL REPORTERS ASSOCIATION,
ON “AFFECTIONATE TORTURE” PROGRAM OF ATV**

On January 25, 2014 at the public ([aquarium](#)) session Media Ethics Observatory considered the complaint by Arzuman Harutyunian, President of Audio-Visual Reporters Association, on “Affectionate Torture” program of “Ajar Windows” talk show cycle broadcasted by ATV channel on December 9, 2013.

MEO Board came to the following conclusion:

1. Based on Paragraph 4.1 of the Code of Conduct of Media Representatives (“To respect and to protect the human right to private life: only public interest can justify interferences with the privacy of officials, public figures, and individuals aspiring to the power or public attention”), the MEO members find that interference to private life which took place in the program cannot be justified by prevailing public necessity: guests of the show were not public figures or people seeking public attention.

2. Participation of children in the program, the questions asked to them along with the insistence to get the desirable answers from them and the vocabulary used in the program contradict Paragraph 4.3 of the Code of Conduct: “To be especially tactful when the sources of information or the heroes of publications are children or minors, and to be careful when disclosing the identity of juvenile defendants, victims of sexual crimes, and persons, who have committed suicide.”

During the program the children were forced to listen to unflattering opinions about their parents, which also imply improper approach to minors.

The name of the victim of sexual offence (trafficking) was disclosed during the program, which is a violation to Paragraph 4.3 of the Code of Conduct.

3. MEO believes that the program did not comply with the ethical norms

spelled out by UNICEF directory on preparing materials about children, i.e. Point 1 - how to take interview from children.

4. According to Paragraph 4.4 of the Code of Conduct (“When collecting information about people that have suffered tragedy or sorrow, when taking interviews or photos of such people, or when broadcasting video or audio materials about them, to be tactful towards them”), MEO stresses that the program did not comply with the principle of discretion. In fact, there has been abuse of credulity and inexperience of children and other program guests who do not have experience of communicating with the media.

5. MEO reminds about the Principle 8 provided by Appendix to Recommendation Rec(2003)13 of the CE Committee of Ministers to member states on the provision of information through the media in relation to criminal proceedings: “The provision of information about suspects, accused or convicted persons or other parties to criminal proceedings should respect their right to protection of privacy in accordance with Article 8 of the Convention. Particular protection should be given to parties who are minors or other vulnerable persons, as well as to victims, to witnesses and to the families of suspects, accused and convicted. In all cases, particular consideration should be given to the harmful effect which the disclosure of information enabling their identification may have on the persons referred to in this Principle.”

Based on what is stated above, MEO concludes that in the program subject to this complaint, the TV company violated the right to privacy, abused the credulity of children and people who have no experience of communicating with the media, giving preference to the interest of the audience in such topics.

***Adopted at the MEO session of March 19, 2015,
In the following composition:***

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Mesrop HARUTYUNIAN, Media Expert

Ashot MELIKIAN, Chairman of the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression

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Media Ethics Observatory was established by the media, joining the self-regulation initiative, which make 48 as of today. In its judgments MEO is guided by Code of Conduct of Media Representatives, adopted at the self-regulation body’s meeting on March 10, 2007.