

The CODE of MEDIA ETHICS

Safeguards against xenophobic and anti-migrant coverage

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Who are we?

Cyprus Media Complaints Commission

Established in May 1997 by:

- ✓ Association of Newspapers and Periodical Publishers
- ✓ the owners of private broadcast media
- ✓ Union of Cyprus Journalists
- ✓ Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (6 months later)

Who are we?

Cyprus

Media

Complaints

Commission

2015: amendment of the Constitution to include the Cyprus Online Publishers Association

2017: last amendment / expansion to 17 members (5 representing the so-called «Society of the Citizens»)

Who are we?

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Founding member of the
Alliance of Independent Press
Councils of Europe AIPCE
(established in 1999)

- ✓ network of independent
Press and Media Councils
- ✓ a loose network of
independent content
regulators for media

What is the role of CMCC?

- ✓ Not to regulate content in the Media
- ✓ To safeguard the implementation of the Code of Media Ethics
- ✓ Self-regulatory body

Code of Media Ethics = part of the
Constitution of the Union of Cyprus
Journalists / recognized by all Media



What is the role of CMCC?

For the truth,
correct information and the rights
of the citizen and the journalist

(moto included in the founding declaration
of the Commission)



What is the role of CMCC?



- accuracy of information
- the right of rebuttal and the right to privacy
- conduct of human pain and grief
- obtaining information by dubious means
- copyright, presumption of innocence of suspects and accused people, sexual offences, protection of children
- discrimination

How does the CMCC work?

The Constitution of the Commission states:

*The Commission receives, deals with and decides upon complaints about alleged violations of the Code by a Journalist and/or the Media...
...It also issues, within the spirit of the Code, interpretations of the Code's guidelines.*

Exceptionally, the Commission may deal, on its own initiative, with a case which may constitute a breach of any clause of the Code, because of its importance and seriousness.

How does the CMCC work?

The Constitution of the Commission also states:

...The Commission is not entitled to impose any penalty or to adjudicate compensation. The decisions and findings of the Commission are published. The Journalist or the Media, found in a decision for breach of the Code, have an obligation to publish the relevant decision.

The CODE of MEDIA ETHICS

Article 11

Adverse Discrimination

Article 11

Adverse Discrimination

...The Media avoid any direct or other reference against a person, which contains elements of prejudice based on race, color, language, religion, political or other beliefs, national or social origin, property, age, sexual orientation or other status, including physical or mental illness or disabilities.



«...These qualities refer to the right to diversity of the individual, which must be recognized in practice and respected by all.»

The Code of Media Ethics:

- prohibits the expulsion of individuals or groups as inadmissible

(a provision that covers people with different racial, ethnic, linguistic and religious characteristics)



Declaration of Media Ethics Principles against Racism and Xenophobia

Interpretative Guidelines against anti-migrant coverage, hate speech and stereotypes targeting migrants and refugees

- ✓ a four-page very detailed paper, forwarded to Journalists and Media
- ✓ agreed upon with the office of the Commissioner for Administration
- ✓ addresses in detail issues related to migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and victims of trafficking

Declaration of Media Ethics Principles against Racism and Xenophobia

«...An example of creating prejudice by the media is the reference to ethnic and racial background, when these qualities are not an essential element of the news. This practice is observed mainly in news reports referring to crimes or offenses, or for any other reason, negatively reflecting on individuals or groups, in which the ethnic and racial origin, or simply the fact that the perpetrator or the victim is not a Cypriot, are highlighted as primary element of the news.»

Declaration of Media Ethics Principles against Racism and Xenophobia

«...Xenophobic statements are often published and broadcasted, because in many cases they come from the lips of officials, as has often happened in live discussions, or assertions made by members of the public, usually without contradiction or other point of view.»

Declaration of Media Ethics Principles against Racism and Xenophobia

«...If you are a presenter on a TV or radio show, be prepared to intervene immediately and effectively, and separate your position and the position of the Media in which you work, if any of the guests, whoever they are, make statements that contain the element of hostility or prejudice against immigrants...»

Declaration of Media Ethics Principles against Racism and Xenophobia

«...Strongly disapprove of such statements, when they come from public figures, individuals in positions of power, and individuals who, by virtue of their status, influence public opinion.»



Declaration of Media Ethics Principles against Racism and Xenophobia

«...Always take into account the element of diversity, cultural, racial, ethnic, religious, social, appearance, in order to promote mutual understanding between different groups of the population.

...Do not overemphasize news in which victims or perpetrators are immigrants. Treat this news as if the people involved are Cypriots.»

Declaration of Media Ethics Principles against Racism and Xenophobia

*«...Do not refer to all foreigners as illegal immigrants or in a derogatory manner.
...When referring to immigrants, distinguish between economic migrants, political refugees, asylum seekers, illegal immigrants, victims of trafficking, or those who are under state protection for any reason.»*

Declaration of Media Ethics Principles against Racism and Xenophobia

«...When receiving statements from foreigners, make sure that they understand what you are asking them, and that you have understood their answers correctly. Inform foreigners about the possible effects of their statements, because when they accept to make a statement, they may not be aware of the international dynamics of the media...»

Complaints and responses

	2004	2012	2014	2019
Total	30	22	28	35
Article 11	0	1	0	11
				30%+

CYPRUS MEDIA COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

1

...further improve capacity of Journalists and Media to counter hate speech, intolerance, racism and discrimination

2

...provide support to Journalists and Media exposing hate speech

3

...raise awareness about various types of discrimination through better reporting