



The statement of Media Advocacy Coalition about the process of Switchover to Digital Broadcasting

We would like to voice our position about the obligations imposed upon the Georgian National Communications Commission (GNCC) as a result of February 2014 amendments introduced to the Law of Georgia on Electronic Communications. Before April 1, 2014 the GNCC must ensure announcement of the competition for the operator of digital terrestrial broadcasting. In the course of determining terms of competition, GNCC must act in line with the plan approved by Governmental Decree #206 of February 10, 2014.

Though over a month has passed since the obligations came into force GNCC fails to release the draft decision based on which the announcement of the competition for the operator of Georgian digital terrestrial broadcasting must be conducted and the necessary company must be selected. In view of above, the Coalition believes that information about the process is closed and neither stakeholders nor NGOs, who played an active role in elaboration of strategy for transition to digital broadcasting for the past year, are involved there.

The Coalition assumes that draft decision will be submitted at a session within the deadline of 1 April 2014, though due to lack of time it will be impossible to make substantial remarks and recommendations.

We believe that availability and transparency of the competition decision and competition conditions to be approved, must be ensured from GNCC, as the Action Plan and Recommendations for switchover from analogous terrestrial TV-broadcasting to digital terrestrial broadcasting, submitted by the Ministry of Economy and

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Sustainable Development of Georgia, is general and in the part of conditions for approval of competition conditions the discretion of the GNCC is extensive. The interest of public, of NGO sector and primarily of broadcasters to the process of switchover to digital broadcasting is very high, so we believe appropriate to implement the process maximally openly.

Coalition member organizations:

Open Society Georgia Foundation,
Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA),
Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics,
Georgian Association of Regional Broadcasters (GARB),
Network of Regional Broadcasters,
Regional Media Association,
Mediaclub,
Non-governmental organization for the Civil Sector,
Levan Mikeladze Foundation,
Institute of Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)
Civil Development Institute