



## Common statement

### 8 Years Have Passed Since A1+ TV Company Closure

**Paris – Yerevan, April 2, 2010**

The International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression, Yerevan Press Club, Internews Media Support NGO, Media Diversity Institute-Armenia, Armenian Helsinki Committee, Foundation against violation of law, Civil Society Institute express their concern about the restrictions to the freedom of speech and media in the Republic of Armenia.

The situation has been deteriorating in this realm since 2 April, 2002, when “A1+”, an independent private television Company, was deprived of the right to broadcast. This had an immediate impact on the level of pluralism in Armenia and almost all of the broadcasting companies started to work more cautiously. Hidden censorship is applied by using an economic and tax leverage as well instruments of political involvement.

Since April, 2002, “A1+” television Company has participated in more than 10 tenders on broadcast licensing, and it has been refused a license on every occasion by the National television and Radio Committee. Armenian media and human rights organizations believe that “A1+” is being targeted for political reasons. The authorities, on the other hand, mention that “A1+” has lost the contests of broadcast licensing. The final clarification was made by the European Court of Human Rights. The Court ruled that the Article 10 of the European Convention had been violated, i.e the right of a television Company to impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers in its decision of 17 June, 2008. Nevertheless, RA National Assembly made an amendment to the “Law on television and Radio” according to which tender for broadcast licensing was suspended for two years.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on March 4, 2010 addressed the issue of enforcement of the ECHR decision on “A1+” television Company, and underlined that it “is waiting for the detailed information about the developments of granting effective remedies to the applicant by the authorized court authorities”.

In 2010 the Council of Europe addressed the issue of “A1+” television Company in its resolution 1897 on “Respect for media freedom” (2010) and called upon the Armenian authorities “to revise their legislation on the allocation of broadcasting licenses, which was passed as a countermeasure to the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Meltex Ltd and Mesrop Movsesyan v. Armenia of 17 June 2008”.

In spite of the above mentioned circumstances, “A1+” television Company continues to be deprived of the right to broadcast.

We call upon Armenian authorities to provide conditions that will guarantee the freedom of expression in Armenia. Particularly, to provide impartiality and transparency of future tenders on broadcast licensing and hereby to ensure well-founded and justified decisions which will restore public trust.