

Pursuant to Article 83 of the Law on Electronic Media (Official Gazette of the RS, number 92/23), at its session held on 7 May 2024,
the Council of the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media adopted a

R U L E B O O K **on the Accessibility of Programme Content to Persons with Hearing or Visual Impairments**

Scope of Rulebook

Article 1

This Rulebook regulates in more detail the obligations of television media service providers to make their programme content accessible to persons with hearing or visual impairments, the manner of use of the Serbian sign language, open and closed captions and audio description, and the manner of reporting, in order to ensure their unhindered exercise of the right to public information.

Meaning of terms

Article 2

Open or closed captions are on-screen text conveying in textual form broadcast speech or other sound of programme content and are largely synchronised with the broadcast sound.

Open captions are made available alongside content to all viewers regardless of their will, while closed captions are made available through an additional service (e.g. teletext, etc.), and the viewer voluntarily decides whether to use them.

The Serbian sign language is a natural form of communication of the deaf, which has its linguistic properties (grammatical functions, phonology, morphology, syntax), through which a sign language interpreter interprets spoken language or other sound of programme content for viewers with hearing impairment (hereinafter: sign language).

The sign language interpreter is a person who, in accordance with the law, has acquired professional knowledge for performing the tasks of interpreting spoken language into sign language and vice versa.

Open or closed audio description of content is a narrative description of programme content that is made available alongside it, describing in particular its important parts (location of action, surroundings, colours, character's facial expressions and movements, etc.) that the blind would not be able to perceive or understand through regular sounds of content.

Open audio description of content is made available alongside content to all viewers regardless of their will, while closed audio description is made available through an additional service (e.g. a separate app, etc.), and the viewer voluntarily decides whether to use it.

Accessibility of programme content to persons with hearing or visual impairments

Article 3

The media service provider shall, in accordance with its financial and technical capabilities, make its programme and content accessible to persons with hearing or visual impairments and constantly work on the inclusion of the Serbian sign language, open and closed captions and audio description.

Manner of use of captions and sign language

Article 4

Letters and signs used in captions should be clearly visible, in terms of their size and colour and considering the colour of the visual content alongside which they are made available, as well as the colour of their background if one is used.

Captions shall be made available in the lower part of the screen, except where this may obscure the mouth of the person speaking or other important information or activity.

Apart from speech, captions shall also clearly communicate other broadcast sounds, such as mood or the tempo of the broadcast music and the lyrics of song, reactions of the studio audience, etc.

The screen space intended for the sign language interpreter who uses sign language to interpret the sounds of programme content should be placed in the lower right-hand corner of the screen and should be no smaller than 1/6 of the image broadcast and must not be used to publish other content (subtitles, chyron, etc.). The background behind the interpreter should be monochromatic and should not contain distracting content.

The sign language interpreter shall apply techniques that will indicate whose speech is being interpreted into the Serbian sign language to the deaf, and techniques that will direct their attention to other important sounds. The sign language interpreter shall wear darker monochromatic clothing, must not wear conspicuous jewellery, and must not have conspicuous details on nails and hands that distract from following the interpretation into sign language. Virtual interpreters are allowed to look different, especially in children's programmes.

Accessibility of programme content in election campaigns

Article 5

Public media broadcasters and commercial media service providers that are licenced to provide media services in the territory of the entire Republic of Serbia, in accordance with their financial and technical capabilities, shall make the election programme in the central current affairs programme accessible to persons with hearing or visual impairments.

The obligation referred to in paragraph 1 of this article shall also apply to commercial media service providers who have acquired the right to provide services through another electronic communications network (cable or satellite distribution system, IPTV, etc.), whose number of users of media content distribution service exceeds 1,000,000.

Media service providers that are licence holders in an individual or aggregate coverage areas, which are not the territory of the entire Republic of Serbia, shall, in accordance with their financial and technical capabilities, make accessible to persons with hearing or visual impairments at least one news and current affairs programme which deals in full or in part with the election campaign, during the day.

The obligation referred to in paragraph 3 of this article shall also apply to media service providers that have acquired the right to provide service through another electronic communications networks (cable or satellite distribution system, IPTV, etc.), whose number of users of media content distribution service does not exceed 1,000,000.

Accessibility of urgent information of importance for life and health

Article 6

When transmitting urgent information of importance for life and health, media service providers shall make the information accessible to persons with hearing or visual impairments.

The obligation referred to in paragraph 1 of this article consists of displaying open captions highlighted by a light signal and flashing in a bright colour, accompanied at the same time by an authentic audio signal, as long as the danger persists.

The media service provider that, in its programme study provided for media service provision in the languages of national minorities, shall, when transmitting urgent information of importance for life and health, make the information accessible to persons with hearing or visual impairments belonging to the national minority, in the manner prescribed by paragraph 2 of this article.

Reporting obligation

Article 7

Media service providers shall report once a year, by 31 January of the current year, to the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media (hereinafter: Regulator) on the execution of the obligations under this Rulebook for the previous year by submitting the following data:

- 1) type of programme content accessible to persons with hearing or visual impairments;
- 2) broadcast date, programme name, programme duration;
- 3) manner of accessibility of programme content to persons with hearing or visual impairments;
- 4) weekly, monthly and annual share of programme content adjusted to persons with hearing or visual impairment.

Cessation of validity of regulation

Article 8

With the entry into force of this Rulebook, the Recommendation on Increased Accessibility of Programme Content to Persons with Disabilities (published on the website of the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media on 24 May 2019) and the Recommendation on the Manner of Use of Captions and Sign Language (published on the website of the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media on 9 February 2015) shall cease to be valid.

Entry into force

Article 9

This Rulebook shall enter into force on the eighth day from the day of its publication in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia.

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In Belgrade, 7 May 2024
Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media
President of the Council

Olivera Zekić