

“AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE IN ALBANIA”

The 11th Meeting of BRAF

14-16 April 2025

Baku, Azerbaijan

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1. CONTEXT

- This presentation focuses on the activity of the Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA);
- AMA - independent regulatory authority in charge of regulating the audio, audio-visual activity of broadcasters / distributors of audiovisual services and video-sharing platform services in AL;
- AMA shapes the policy objectives on audiovisual media landscape in AL.

2. LEGAL BASIS AND STATUS OF AMA

- Law no. 97/2013 “On audiovisual media in the Republic of Albania”, as amended.
- This law defines:
 - The status, competencies, organisation and functions of AMA;
 - Legal aspects of the independence of AMA;
 - Proposal and appointment of AMA Chair, Deputy Chair and members;
 - Proposal and appointment of AMA’s Complaints Council;
 - Manner of financing, organising, functioning and decision-making, etc.

- The Board of AMA is composed of a Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson, and five members appointed by the Parliament of Albania.
- The Board members are chosen among distinguished media/other professionals in the country, for a 5 years mandate with the possibility of only one mandate renewal.
- Media law provides for an independent structure within the AMA – The Complaints Council.
- The Complaints Council is appointed by the AMA Board with 3/5 majority of votes and is composed of the Chair and 2 members, who are experts in the media field.
- The members of the Complaints Council operate for a 3-year mandate, with the possibility of only one mandate renewal.

3. CURRENT AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE IN AL

- The present audiovisual media landscape in Albania is quite rich and diverse.
- AMA grants both licenses and authorizations to broadcasters wanting to offer audio or audiovisual media services in the entire, or parts of the territory of Albania, under strict rules and criteria, as stipulated in Law no. 97/2013, as amended and respective regulations, approved by the Authority's Board.

Referring to the licenses or authorizations granted by AMA to audio, or cable retransmission subjects, OTT/IPTV subjects, currently there are:

- **56** audio broadcasters;
- **38** audiovisual broadcasters
- **66** cable retransmission subjects;
- **2** private satellite platforms;
- **17** OTT/IPTV repeaters;
- **2** Video On Demand (VOD).

- The public service broadcaster Albanian Radio and Television (RTSH) is composed of 16 TV Channels and 11 radio channels, all of which are freely accessible by more than 95% of the Albanian population.
- Aside from the national public broadcaster, AMA has granted to private audiovisual broadcasters:
 - 5 national licenses (no less than 80% of country's territory is covered by signal);
 - 25 regional licenses (for coverage of up to 4 geographically consecutive administrative regions);
- **A crucial aspect to mention is the list of free channels that are broadcasted in the entire territory of Albania:**
- **In Dibra – 36 channels**
- **In Lezhe – 39 channels**
- **In Gjirokaster – 39 channels**
- **In Shkoder – 42 channels**
- **In Kukes – 35**
- **Elbasan – 40**
- **Vlora – 40**
- **Fier – 37**
- **Berat – 38**
- **Tirana – 42 free channels**

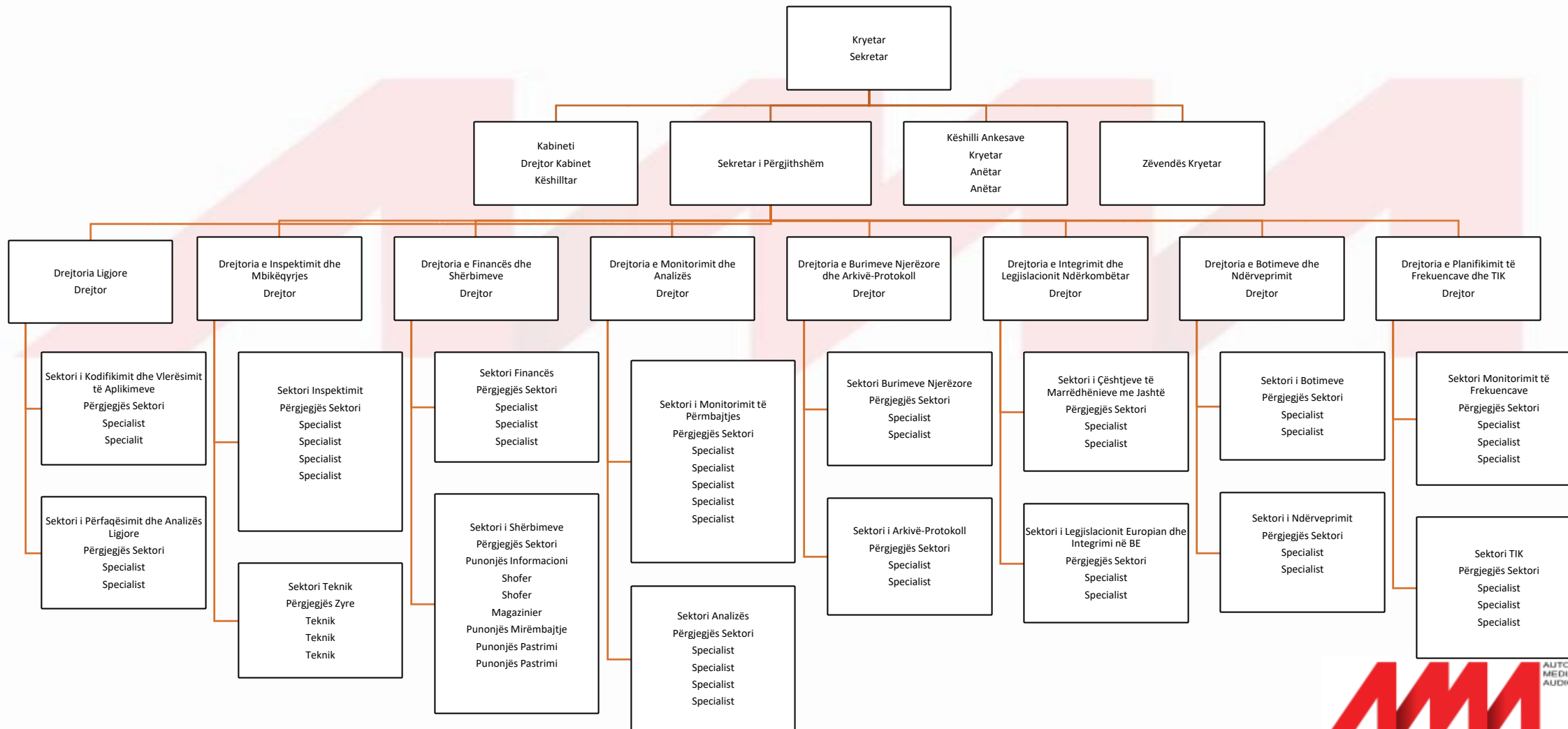
4. INCREASING INSTITUTIONAL REPUTATION AND COMPLIANCE TO EU REQUIREMENTS

The Strategic Action Plan of the AMA for 2024-2026 formed one of the core pillars for achieving objectives set from the Authority.

Following the Decision No. 86/2022 “On the Approval of the Structure, Organization, and Categorization of Positions at the Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA),” approved by the Albanian Parliament, in 2023 the AMA adapted to the new structure.

Actually the capacities are complete and the institutional structure is in compliance with EU requirements having sufficient and suitable staff, as well as effectiveness and expertise.

5. NEW STRUCTURE OF AMA



5. AMA'S RECENT ACTIVITIES

- Transposition of EU Directive 2018/1808.
- The decision no. 40, dated April 26, 2024, has approved the Regulation "On the criteria and procedures for reviewing changes in ownership structure and the transparency of data related to the ownership of OSHMAs."
- The regulation "On the Special Requirements for Video Sharing Platform Providers," approved by AMA with decision no. 128, dated December 23, 2024, aims to create effective, transparent, and user-friendly systems, as well as establish mechanisms for content complaint and monitoring.
- The Media Literacy Campaign
- The process of Audience Measurement
- Performance of functional duties on conducting inspections or administrative investigations, decisions on sanctions with penalties.

6. AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA AUTHORITY AND MEDIA LITERACY

Media Literacy in the framework of the regulatory activity of the AMA is carried out:

Directly (through the audience empowerment strategy), which includes:

- encouragement of using the complaint mechanism and friendly complaint procedures by the public
- awareness campaign
- thematic consultation with audiovisual media market actors

Indirectly (promotion and support of joint initiatives), which includes:

- legal steps or review of legal and sub-legal acts
- partnership with civil society
- inter institutional cooperation

7. AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA AUTHORITY AND MEDIA LITERACY CAMPAIGN

As part of Media Education, AMA, in collaboration with the Turkish regulatory authority, carried out an educational audiovisual campaign with over 20 videos for children and parents, aiming to promote the safe and beneficial use of audiovisual content and guidance in the digital environment. The videos have been published on the Authority's website and social media networks. Additionally, AMA organized advisory roundtables for different age groups, initially focusing on preschool children.

Weekly awareness campaign “**SPEAK ALBANIAN**” aimed at the language standards used in media, focusing on cleaning the language of foreign words used excessively.

Awareness campaign focused on preschool children aged 5 due to their developmental characteristics and need for guidance in the audiovisual and digital world as they approach an important milestone in their lives, such as schooling. The Media Education process also included the campaign titled "Media Competence for Preschool Age," designed and led by the Complaints Council at AMA during the first half of 2024.

The process of Audience Measurement

The accepted formula consists of 9 members as follows:

- 3 (three) representatives from nationally licensed private television stations;
- 3 (three) representatives from regional television stations;
- 1 (one) representative from the Albanian Public Television (RTSH); and
- 2 (two) representatives from marketing agencies.

After 6 months of ongoing discussions with media stakeholders to find a common formula that includes the main weight of the media as well as advertising agencies, the official establishment of the Joint Industry Committee (JIC) was agreed upon.

Following an encouraging process for all parties, under the leadership of the Audiovisual Media Authority, the Joint Industry Committee (JIC), as a fully organized entity with all its stakeholders, has taken the next step—registration in court.

8. Revision of media law and secondary legislation aim to improve the following aspects:

- align domestic legislation with EU acquis in the field of audiovisual media;
- guarantee the right to information and freedom of expression;
- increasing transparency of ownership of audiovisual media service providers;
- protection of the dignity, rights and fundamental freedoms of human beings, especially of children, from content that may harm their physical, mental or moral development;
- encourage self-regulation and co-regulation as a complement to legislative, judicial and administrative mechanisms;
- increase access to audiovisual content for differently-abled people;
- improving media literacy as a mean to counter disinformation.

➤ Regulation “On the requests and procedures for reviewing changes in the ownership structure and the transparency of the ownership data of the audiovisual media service providers (OSHMA).” -April 2024

The review by AMA of changes occurring in the ownership structure within the same legal entity of OSHMA, which do not lead to the transfer or passing of rights derived from the license or authorization;

The review of changes in the ownership structure between private legal entities in cases of entering into civil legal relations that lead to the transfer or passing of rights derived from the license or authorization;

The declaration of information regarding the composition of the ownership structure of the legal entity OSHMA holding the license or authorization from AMA, including the direct and indirect beneficial owner;

Increased transparency of the source of financing related to the capital transactions of the media company, carried out by the partner/shareholder;

The declaration of any potential conflicts of interest affecting the activity of OSHMA by its owners, etc.

Database of ownership of Media Subject.

- Regulation “On the special requirements that providers of video-sharing platforms must meet for the creation and provision of transparent, effective, and user-friendly systems”-December 2024

A legal act that specifically addresses the legal regulation of video-sharing platforms

This regulation also aims to regulate the general conditions for the provision of audiovisual content by users on video-sharing platforms and does not affect supporting services of audiovisual broadcasting, with the main purpose being the provision of programs for information, entertainment, or education.

9. AMA IN COLLABORATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS

The Authority has continued its collaboration with institutions and organizations that work and contribute in the field of media.

- roundtables involving representatives from AMSPs, civil society organizations, representatives of central and local institutions, as well as national and international partners.
- projects in collaboration with civil society organizations and other interested partners, aiming to improve the media landscape and journalism in the country.
- studies analyzing media freedom in the country, highlighting its importance for the functioning of democracy and national development
- programs and training to encourage young people in journalism.

10. Cooperation in national and international level:

- AMA participated in several collaborative roundtables with other national institutions, addressing various issues and/or challenges, particularly in the context of aligning legislation with the EU acquis.
- AMA conducted a series of periodic meetings with various international partners, such as OSCE/ODIHR, the Council of Europe, the Centre for European Perspective (CEP), focusing on media monitoring during the electoral process, disinformation, freedom of expression and media, media literacy, and more.
- AMA held consultative meetings and exchanged experiences with representatives of regulatory authorities from several EU member states.

11. Upcoming priorities for 2025:

- Part of AMA's work will be focused on amendments to current legislation, in line with the entry to force of the amended Law no. 97/2013, that will include more detailed requirements on Broadcasting Rights and Piracy.
- One of AMA's goals is the transparency in media financing,
- AMA will continue its cooperation with various partners working in the field of media, for the realization of various projects in favor of improving the quality of journalism in audiovisual media.





Thank you for your attention!