

## **Agency for Electronic Media, UNICEF Office for Croatia and experts together to protect the rights of children in Electronic Media**

On 22 January 2015, the Agency for the Electronic Media and UNICEF Office for Croatia have organized a discussion on the proposal of the new Ordinance on the Protection of Children in the electronic media. The hearing was attended by representatives of the media, government, associations of parents, the Ombudsman for Children, developmental psychologists and media experts, in order to jointly improve the existing regulation in electronic media and categorization of programs.

New regulations are part of the activities to be carried out under the Memorandum of Understanding between AEM and UNICEF, signed in September 2014, in order to support the development of media literacy of parents and children as well as to encourage the electronic media to take advantage of their potential as much as possible in order to improve the quality of television viewing habits of children and their families.

The importance of this cooperation and gathering professional community rests on the fact that the electronic media, especially television, have a great potential to positively influence the quality of life of children and their families. It points to survey on how children watch television, based on a sample of one thousand parents who answered the habits of 1561 children. According to the survey, parents estimate that the majority of children (56%) carried out one to three hours a day in front of television screens, while data on the ratings on the average television programme show that children watch three hours a day. According to the ratings, every second child is watching television without a parent, while at the discretion of the parents does every third child.

Children under 12 years watch television mainly in the presence of their parents, while older children take their own decisions about what to watch or mostly they watch television alone. Many parents cite adequacy of the contents of the child's age as a criterion for deciding whether a child should watch certain shows. 63% of parents consult a mark on the appropriateness of content.

According to the assessment of parents 70% of children loves to watch cartoons, programs for children (36%), followed by musical shows (31%), films (28%), documentary programs (25%) and sports (24%); soap operas and telenovelas - 15%, reality shows – 14% and commercials – 12%.

Mirjana Rakić, the president of the Council and the director of the Agency said: "The media environment today is changing rapidly, and technological advances and convergence affect easier access to the media content to everyone, at any time, at different platforms. Therefore, the Agency and the Council, in adopting the necessary regulatory provisions on the protection of minors, take care about the comprehensive social-media context. We believe that the implementation of public campaigns and education, in order to spread media literacy is the best prevention of protection mechanism for parental and editorial recognition of harmful content for children's and young people development, and therefore continuous cooperation with UNICEF, psychologists, media workers, and with interested public is extremely valuable“.

The adoption of the Ordinance will be followed by drafting recommendations that will serve editors for quality categorizing content, but also as a guide parents to select a television program for children. The drafting of recommendations will include experts in the field of children and media developmental psychology, as well as media experts. Also, a public campaign directed to parents and professional education the editors of the electronic media will be organized.