



Hellenic Republic

In response to the alert with regard to allegations that Greek media critical of the government were excluded or side-lined from a €20 million financial support scheme during the Covid-19 pandemic, we submit the following information:

From the first moment of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government has moved quickly to address the health and economic consequences of this unpredictable and global crisis. The fact that our country dealt effectively with the pandemic so far, in comparison with other countries, is due to the individual responsibility, the collective maturity as well as the quick and correct decisions of the Government based on the suggestions of experts.

Timely and valid information sent to our citizens contributed decisively in dealing effectively with the Covid-19 pandemic. The Government reacted quickly, shaping the legal basis for the Covid-19 information framework with articles 30 and 31 of the Legislative Act of March 14 2020, ratified by article 3 of the law 4682/2020 (A '76).

The emergency situation due to Covid-19 required the immediate activation of an information mechanism, following the instructions and recommendations of our experts. This mechanism was implemented by a professional, organized, coherent communication and information campaign, unfolded in all sorts of media; indeed, we had the responsibility, as an organized State, to shape fast an effective communication and information campaign, as valid and timely information has literally saved lives.

This campaign lasted until May 31 and covered all categories of Media: print media, TV channels, radio stations, websites as well as social media.

On April 10, 2020, at a special meeting of the Parliamentary Institutions and Transparency Committee, the Deputy Minister to the Prime Minister and Government Spokesman Stelios Petsas presented in detail the aspects of the campaign.

The elaboration of the communication campaign plan was entrusted to a contractor, who had the special knowledge, experience and specialized staff to implement it in a timely and efficient manner, utilizing advanced tools and know-how in terms of media coverage, as measured in terms of viewing, audience or traffic as well as the impact on specific audience categories.

The aim of the campaign was, regarding its targeted messages, to address different social and age groups and different sectors of economic activity (general public, vulnerable groups, employees, entrepreneurs, freelancers, educational community, etc.). In this manner, several objectives would be achieved, such as public awareness, consolidation of measures to prevent or limit the spread of COVID-19, as well as informing the public about measures to immediately address the negative consequences, when gradual lifting of restrictive measures would start, maintenance of good practices and implementation of a targeted and balanced exit strategy.

This campaign was spread across all categories of Media in order to disseminate the messages of the campaign as wide and effective as possible, provided that the participating media meet the criteria of objectivity and impartiality and respect the ethical principles, taking into account the credibility of the media with regard to non-reproduction of fake news and not create public confusion.

Media that participated in the campaign were defined by such criteria focusing to the desired result, keeping in mind the need to organize a valid campaign and protect the safety of citizens.

Therefore, the political position of Media was never set as criterion for exclusion from the campaign. On the contrary, media constantly criticizing the work of the government participated in the campaign; for example, media such as Avgi, Efimerida ton Syntakton, Rizospastis, Dromos tis Aristeras, the radio station STO KOKKINO.

It should be stressed that in this campaign, special care was attributed to the participation of local and regional media in the distribution of the total expenditure, per category of media (print press, radio, television, sites) and social media.

The campaign involved a total of 1232 media of all categories, effectively covering the entire spectrum. The list was presented and delivered to the Greek Parliament, is fully accessible and named all the Media of all categories that participated in the campaign as well as the amount that each one of them received.

For all information regarding the campaign complete transparency was guaranteed. Payments to the Media were not processed by the contractor but by the Ministry of Finance, based on the invoices issued and according to the rules that apply for payments.