

ALBANSKI JAVNI SERVIS, TVSH, OSVRT NA TRŽIŠNU EKONOMIJU

ALBANIAN PUBLIC BROADCASTING, TVSH, REFLECTING ON THE MARKET ECONOMY

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Sažetak

Rad se odnosi na razvoj albanske javne televizije, TVSH, u medijskom pejzažu u kojem dominiraju privatne televizije. Opšte je zapaženje da u odnosu na publiku, brojnost je znatno veća na privatnim televizijskim kućama u odnosu na javni servis. Razvoj TVSH je posmatran iz tri različita ugla: (i) programski raspored i njegov razvoj po žanrovima. Ovo će identifikovati koji programski žanrovi najviše procentualno zauzimaju programa emitovanja, kako je to smješteno u određenom vremenskom periodu i budžetu; (ii) organizaciona strana TVSH-a, uzimajući u obzir skorašnje trendove upravnih tijela zasnovanih na zakonskim osnovama; (iii) tehnološki napredak u eri prelaska na digitalizaciju.

Programski sadržaj će biti analiziran u periodu od 2003 do 2013. Program TVSH se razvijao tokom godina kako u vremenskom tako i žanrovskom smislu. Međutim, još uvijek postoji potreba za razvojem kvaliteta. Način na koji su programi predstavljeni treba novo preuređenje. Shvatanje je da publika TVSH stari i da je u udaljenim krajevima.

U periodu od 2013 do 2015 na organizaciju TVSH je uticala nova zakonska odredba i izborni proces Upravnog tijela i Generalnog direktora.

Rad će se fokusirati na razvoj albanskog TVSH u momentu prelaska na digitalno zemaljsko emitovanje, budući da je prethodno postavljeni rok za prelazak bio sredina juna 2015. prošao i pomjeran od strane Regulatorne agencije.

Ključne riječi: *javna televizija, programski raspored, organizacija, rukovodeća tijela, prelazak na digitalno emitovanje.*

Abstract

The paper addresses the developments of the Albanian public television, TVSH, in a media landscape dominated by private televisions. The general perception is that in regard to the audience, the number are quite higher for the private television than the public one. The developments of TVSH are seen in three different angles: (i) the programming schedule and its evolution by genre. This will identify which are the genres of programs that occupy the highest percentage of airtime, how is that placed in certain time slot and the budget; (ii) the organization side of TVSH, considering the recent trend of managing bodies based on legislation; (iii) the technology progress on the eve of the digital switch over.

The programming content will be analysed through period 2003-2013. TVSH programming has expanded over the years in terms of time and genres as well. But the quality is still in need, and the way programs are presented needs a make-over. The perception is that TVSH audience is growing older and remote.

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During 2013 – 2015 the organization side of TVSH is influenced by the new legislation, and the election process of the Steering Committee and the General Director.

The paper set the focus on the development of Albanian TVSH on the point of transition to digital terrestrial broadcasting, as the previous deadline for switch over, set for mid June 2015, has passed and postponed by the regulator.

Keywords: public television, programming schedule, organization, leading bodies, digital switch over.

Albanian Public Television, (TVSH), started its broadcasting on April 29, 1960, at time covering a small part of the capital city, Tirana. In 1966 TVSH signal reached the nearing city of Durrës (less than 40 km South East of Tirana). In those first years, TVSH broadcasted from its experimental studios, at Radio Tirana, for only 2 hours of program, three days a week, non live format. In November 1971, TVSH started its first live broadcasting.² Over the years, TVSH added its broadcasting time, program genres produced, as well as their quality. In 1980, TVSH broadcasted about 4 hours, from 18:00 to 22:15 on weekdays and all day Sundays.

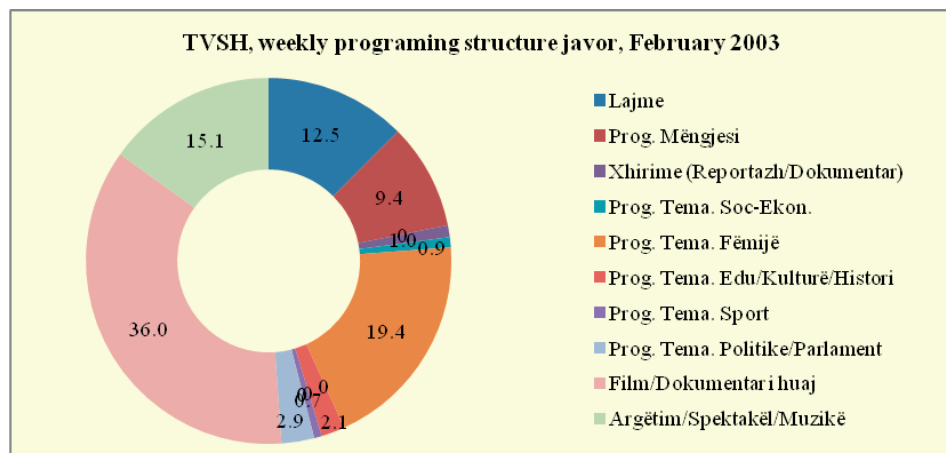
In 1989 the program began at 17:30, with the learning foreign languages programs, English and French. During that time most of the programs accounted for newscasts, three editions, approximately 65 minutes daily, out of 255 minutes in total broadcasting per day. The schedule has also 25 minute children program as a daily average. The program was expanded over the years, starting broadcasting at midday in 90s and shortly after that starting at 8:00 am.

Current Programming TV

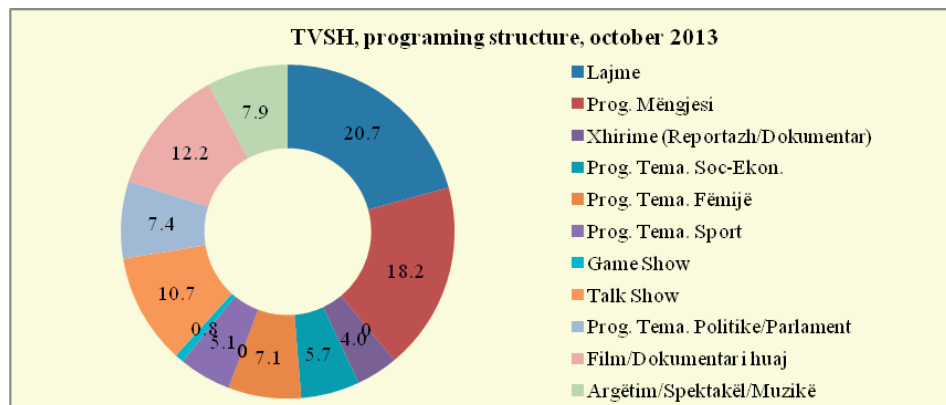
TVSH is currently in broadcasting in analogue system with two TV channels and has a national coverage over 70% of the territory of the country. Through the calculation of the TV programming for the Albanian public television, there are different reports between TV genders of program productions and there is an obvious evolution of the programs over the years.³

² Radio Televizioni Shqiptar, Arkiva.

³ The calculation of TV program percentage for each of TV genres is done by the author, based on the programming schedule, explanation at the end notes.



Graph 1: Programming structure, TVSH 20034 (%)

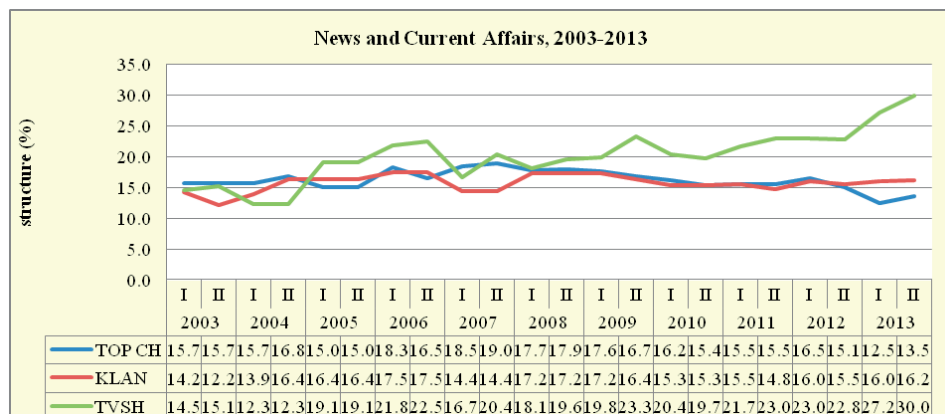


Graph 2: Programming structure, TVSH 20135 (%)

While comparing the programming structure of the TVSH and the other two private national coverage TV station in Albania, respectively TV Klan and TOP Channel TV, there are differences in some genres of broadcasting. Those percentages have varied from year to year. The graph below compares the times series of 2003-2013 for Albanian public television TVSH, TV Klan and Top Channel for percentages of News and Current Affairs combined together (including all political debates and parliamentary session).

4 The list of categories in classification below are: News; Morning show; Reportage and Documentary; Programs with Social Economic topics; Children Programs; Programs of Education Culture and History; Sport Programs; Political Debates and Parliamentary Broadcasting; Movies and Foreign Documentary; Entertainment, Musical Programs and Spectacles.

5 The list of categories in classification below are: News; Morning show; Reportage and Documentary; Programs with Social Economic topics; Children Programs; Game Show; Talk Show; Political Debates and Parliamentary Broadcasting live or recorded; Movies and Foreign Documentary; Entertainment, Musical Programs and Spectacles.



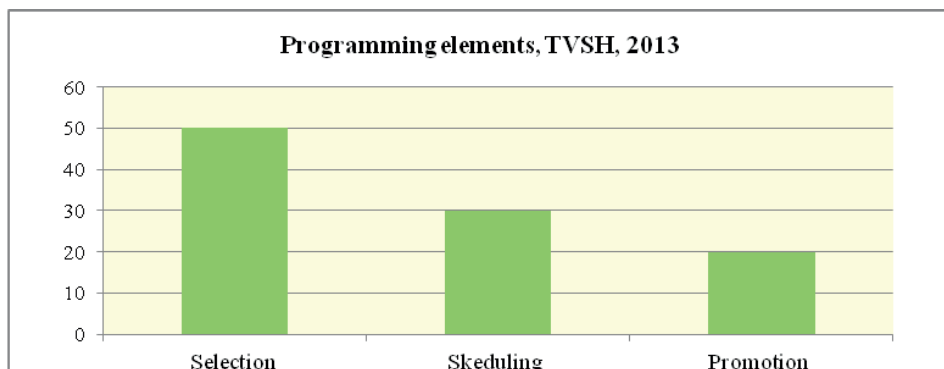
Graph 3: Dynamics of "News and Current Affairs" in the national coverage TV station in Albania, 2003-2013 (%)

The above indicators are an average calculation based on programming schedule of a week in March and October, for these televisions, reflecting the development trends over the years, for only these two types of programs. These percentages do not take into calculation the election campaigns periods. During the local government elections as well as parliamentary ones, programming schedule of national coverage television varies adding to their programs prime time political debates almost every evening. The TVSH has also the legal obligation to provide free air time to political parties which are present in the parliament to present their programs during the election campaign.⁶ According to the Electoral Code, during the election campaign, TVSH has to give free air time to Central Election Committee (Article 82).

The chart for News programs and Current Affairs News shows an increase of the programs of this nature, which for Public Television, TVSH, have almost doubled its percentage over an 11-year period. This situation was almost similar during 2014 and the first quarter of 2015.

While comparing the strategies of programming and elements of programming, Selection, Scheduling and Promotion, it is worth to note that out of 100%, the programmer at the TVSH gave the importance of 50% to the selection of programs, 30% to the scheduling of them and only 20% to the promotion of programs. This figures are similar to the private TV channels, but the promotion of the programs, which is slightly higher in private TV channels.

⁶ "The Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania", Article 83. Seen in <http://www.osce.org/albania/159501?download=true>

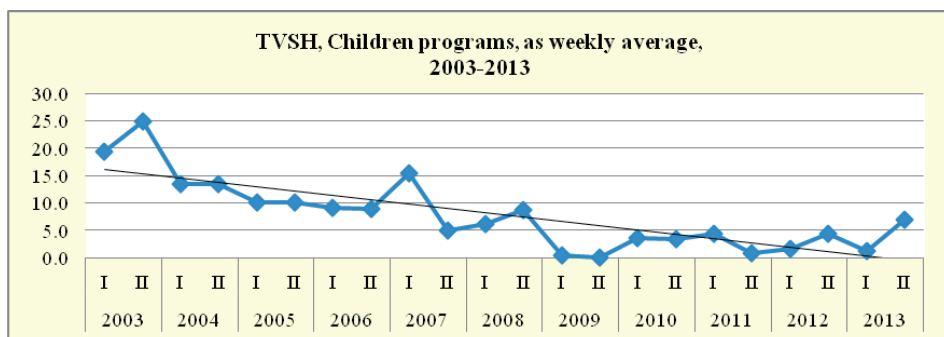


Graph 4: Programming elements and their importance for TVSH, 2013 (%)

Annual Report National Council of Radio and Television (now Audiovisual Media Authority, AMA) for 2011 expressed the problem of disproportion between TV time allocated to different genres and topics in TV coverage, present also at the TV programming of the public television TVSH. In a more precise way, the NCRT express concern for time allocated to children programs.

[...] There is no need for “subversion” or innovation in the structure of national television program operators, but for a more responsible approach, for a further appreciation of the need of the increasingly high quality of direct programming for children, that should be part of the programming schedules. This becomes more evident as the main part in programming for children is still occupied by animated films, often repeated in multiple rebroadcast, old and seen, that do not attract interest of the children of different age groups who have seen them year after year, from one TV channel to the other.”⁷

The graph below shows the developments of the programs for children over the years. The falling tendency of the time dedicated to children programs is mostly related with its own program production of TVSH especially during 2009-2013.

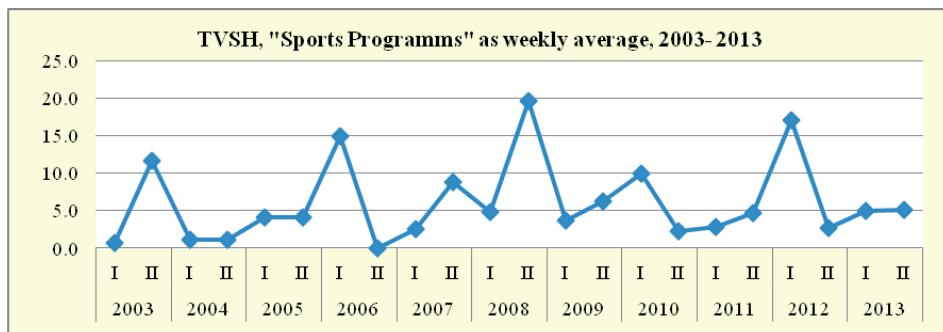


Graph 5: Dynamics of “Children programs” for TVSH, 2003-2013 (%)

⁷ National Council of Radio and Television, 2012 “Annual Report of activities for year 2011” page 21 seen on Internet page www.kkrt.gov.al on 15 October 2014

In 2014 and first half of 2014, TVSH has raised the number and the hours of programming for children, but they are yet dominated by movies, cartoons and still in a small percentage of them is production realized in the studio of TVSH.

Other genres of TV programming have also developed. Thanks to the membership at the European Broadcasting Union, (EBU) TVSH broadcasts most of the world wide sports events, such as Football World Cup, Olympic Games. This is also shown in graphics below as the percentage of the programs occupied by sports is higher in the times of such events.



Graph 6: Dynamics of "Sport programs" for TVSH, 2003-2013 (%)

Although there is a growing number production of different genders in TVSH, there are still analysts who criticize TVSH programming for a better educative and informative role it should play in the society. The TVSH mission is different and should support even those types of programs that do not enjoy a lot of attention from the marketing industry. A. Fuga expresses:

"Where programming is dominated by advertising, it is hard to find an opera, a theater, a debate about the book, a scientific documentary in prime time, and those values that are irreplaceable for public education. The future of public television is not the ads, even though, within some conditions and boundaries, it can be used."⁸

Those TV productions are also in line with the obligation TVSH has as a public broadcaster stated at its declaration of purpose, according to which

[...] "TVSH present to the all age audience, the diversity of the Albanian life, while preparing quality programs that embodies values for enrichment of the mental and spiritual inside of the people".⁹

Since October 2012, the public broadcaster has other channels in digital platform. Three thematic channels, in Standard Definition were added. So there is TVSH Sport, TVSH Music and TVSH ART. In this group of digital channels, TVSH also broadcast TV program of RTK Kosova. Another program added was the TVSH program in *High Definition* by logo RTSH HD.¹⁰

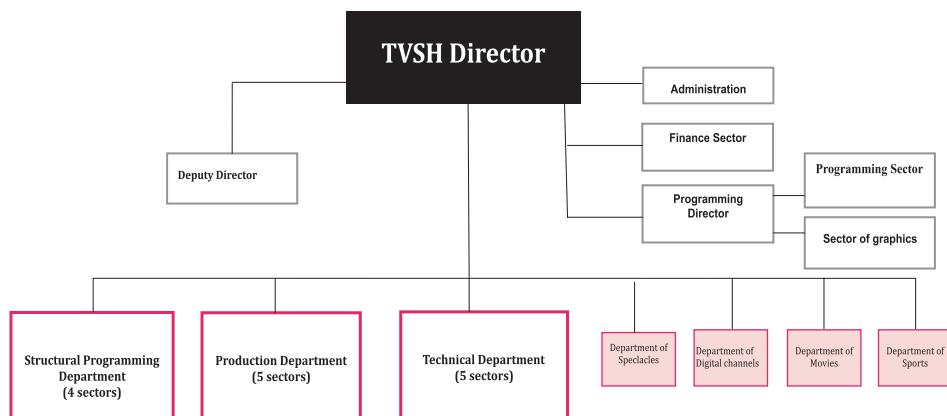
⁸ Fuga, Artan. "Kthimi i radiotelevizionin shqiptar publikut dhe jo kalim i tij dorë më dorë", *Gazeta Panorama*, Tiranë 3 February 2014, <http://al.ejo-online.eu/1688/politika-e-medias/kthimi-i-radiotelevizionin-shqiptar-publikut-dhe-jo-kalim-i-tij-dore-me-dore>.

⁹ Law no. 97/2013 "Për media audiovizive në Republikën e Shqipërisë", Neni 91, pika 3.

¹⁰ Braka, Marian. "Speaking on the report of the Albanian Radio and Television activity for 2012", Parliamentary Commission on Education and public Information, Procès-verbal, date 19.03.2013. www.parlament.al (member of the Steering Committee of RTSH, seen on 15 March 2014).

After 2014, some of the programs of the Albanian public television TVSH could be seen on live stream or they are placed in YouTube. But the web page of TVSH still needs to be closely taken care and regularly updated www.rtsh.al

Organization structure of TVSH – 2015



According to the law 97/2013 Public Radio and Television are managed by a Steering Committee of 11 personalities elected by the parliament who are in charged to elect the General Director of RTSH and other managing directors. Since the end of 2013 the mandate of the former Steering Committee had expired and the General Director of Radio and Television had resigned. This created a gap in the management and for more than a year, the RTSH was without proper managing bodies. Only in April 2015 the Steering Committee was elected and on 7 may 2015 the Chairman of the Steering Committee was elected. He was a lawyer, judge, former member of the Strasburg Court. The first duty of the Steering Committee was to elect the General Director. There were 20 candidates for the position. Through an opening hearing process, on June 27, the 16 qualified candidates for General Director presented their platforms. But there were discussion and till mid August (when this paper was written) there is no result in the election of the General Director.

Licensing of digital platforms

Digital television broadcasting platforms began broadcasting in an unprepared regulatory environment, lacking a licensing framework for these transmission formats. First digital platforms in Albania “DIGITALB” stated its broadcasting in July 2004. “DIGITALB” began its terrestrial broadcasts, covering mainly cities of the Central and Western area of the country. In December 2004 this platform began broadcasting via EutelSat satellite covering the entire territory of the Balkans and most of Europe where most of the Albanian language speaking population is located outside of national borders. This platform introduced a whole new series of broadcasting programs representing almost all age groups of audience and variety of television genres.

In 2006, the Albanian media landscape was enriched with another digital satellite platform “SuperSport” which had programs solely dedicated to sports activities 2006.¹¹

In 2008, another broadcasting digital platform start broadcasting called “Tring”. It started based on the decision of the National Council of Radio and Television that gave temporary permission “For experimentation of digital broadcasting “. Temporary permission due day have expired and “Tring” is already licensed as a satellite digital operator.

There are two main documents in the TV digitalization process: Digital Switch over Strategy in Albania and the Law no. 97/2013 “For the audiovisual media in the Republic of Albania”. The final Strategy for Digital Switch-Over (DSO) was adopted by the decision of Council of Ministers no. 292, dated 02.05.2012. The Strategy, the Action Plan and the Law 97/2013 “On the audiovisual media in the Republic of Albania” postpone the transition to digital broadcasting for the final period of June 17, 2015.

Through news published on its web page on 16 April 2015 AMA announced the competition for the award of five private national licenses for digital broadcasting according to the Beauty Contest. AMA called for the submission of application bids for license through Beauty Contest these entities: Klan TV, Top Channel, Digit-Alb, Tring TV and Supersport. The licensing process is still pending and with no results.

Albanian missed the deadline for Digital Switch-Over and a company is currently working to build the platforms (2 Multiplexes) for Albanian Public Television.

Conclusion:

- TVSH has experienced a tendency to increase the air time on broadcasting political programs, political debates and news edition. In 2003 the programs under “News and current affairs” as well as all formats of political debates and live broadcasting of the parliamentary session took together a total of 15.4% of broadcasting time as a weekly average. Meanwhile, in 2013 the same programs took over 28.2% of the total broadcasting time as a weekly average.
- TVSH has reduced air time in children programs and almost lacks completely the investigative reports or investigation programs. There is a disproportion of the programs realized in the studios comparing to a very small time of programs realized as field reporting or as reportages.
- In regard to the organization and managing bodies, it took over 18 months to formally elect and constitute the Steering Committee of RTSH. Further on, since June 2015 there is a deadlock in electing the General Director. Those indicators might lead to a lack of interest from all political parties to deal and reformat the RTSH to serve to the public interest. This also raises a concern on the day that public television will enter in the media market as real professional competitor.
- The latest developments in the licensing of the digital TV platform, the lost deadline on Digital Switch over¹², would also bring changes in the media landscape in the country. The construction of two multiplexes for the public television will open new

11 National Registration Centre, “Historic Extract for “Supersport sh.p.k.”” seen on the Internet page www.qkr.gov.al on 20 February 2014.

12 Autoriteti i Mediave Audiovizive “Mbi mosrespektimin e afateve të procesit të digjitalizimit” (15 qershor 2015) parë në <http://ama.gov.al/preview/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Njoftim-per-median-mbi-afatin-e-digjitalizimit.pdf>

possibilities for TVSH to attract the audiences, but this needs to be going alongside with an effective strategy for entire public broadcaster.

Reference:

1. National Council of Radio and Television, Annual Report for year 2006, seen in www.kkrt.gov.al on 15 October 2013.
2. The programming schedule of TVSH 2013.
3. The programming schedule of Top Channel 2013.
4. The programming schedule of TV KLAN 2013.
5. Historic Extract of "Supersport" seen on the National Registration Center www.qkr.gov.al on 20 February 2014.
6. Digital Switch over Strategy (2013) seen on 31 March 2015 on http://ama.gov.al/preview/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/9STRATEGJIA_E_KALIMIT_NGA_TRANSMETIMET_ANALOGE_NE_TRANSMETIMET_NUMERIKE.pdf
7. Audiovizual Media Authority. News "On the lost deadline for the digitalization process" (<http://ama.gov.al/preview/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Njoftim-per-median-mbi-afatin-e-digjitalizimit.pdf> seen in 15 June 2015.
8. "The Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania", Article 83. Seen in <http://www.osce.org/albania/159501?download=true>
9. National Council of Radio and Television, 2012 "Annual Report of activities for year 2011" page 21 seen on Internet page www.kkrt.gov.al on 15 October 2014
10. Fuga, Artan. "Kthimi i radiotelevizionin shqiptar publikut dhe jo kalim i tij dorë më dorë", *Gazeta Panorama*, Tiranë, 3 February 2014, <http://al.ejo-online.eu/1688/politika-e-medias/kthimi-i-radiotelevizionin-shqiptar-publikut-dhe-jo-kalim-i-tij-dore-me-dore>.
11. Law No. 97/2013 "Për media audiovizive në Republikën e Shqipërisë", Neni 91, pika 3.
12. Braka, Marian. Speaking on the report of the Albanian Radio and Television activity for 2012", Parliamentary Commission on Education and public Information, Procès-verbal, date 19.03.2013. www.parlament.al (member of the Steering Committee of RTSH, seen on 15 March 2014.

Note:

1. The study unit for the programming schedule is a week from 07:00-24:00. In this calculation the advertisement time is not taken in consideration and subtracted. In selection of the typical week for the calculation, was taken in consideration those weeks that present the normal week, taking off those casual factors. The TV stations in general start their season of new programs at the end of September and October. For this reason, studying the programming schedule was studding a week in October (second or the third week of October). In order to create a balance with the changes that might happened in the programming schedule, with the beginning of the calendar year, another week in March was take into calculation.
2. The broadcasting time was divided in categories based in the classification of the foreign literature and the studies of the Albanian researchers "Gazetaria 2" Hamit Boriçi. The categories of the programming are also based in the topics of the program is dealing with and the program is done in the studio or outside shooting, reportage.

Categories are:

1. News; Morning Show; Reportage/Documentary; Program with Social-Economic topics, in studio; Program for children; Investigative Program; Program of Education/Culture/History topics in studio; *Reality Show*; Sport Program; *Game Show*; *Talk Show*, in studio; Studio debate on Politic/Parliament; Film/Foreign Documentaries; Entertainment/Spectacles/Music; Rerun during the day (07:00-24:00).
2. Broadcasting schedule of TVSH are seen on 27 January-3 February and 17-23 November 2003; 16-22 February 2004; 31-6 November 2005; 6-13 February and 30 October-6 November 2006; 19-25 February and 22-28 October 2007; 18 -25 February and 15-21 September 2008; 22-28 February and 21-28 September 2009; 8-14 February and 22-28 November 2010; 21-27 March and 24-31 October 2011; 5-12 March and 22-28 October 2012; 18-24 March and 21-27 October 2013.
3. Broadcasting schedule of TVKLAN are seen on 12-19 May and 13- 0 October 2002; 9-16 March and 12-19 October; 15-22 March and 8-15 October 2004; 27 March-8 April and 31-6 November 2005; 13-19 March 2006; 9-15 April 2007; 17-23 October 2008; 16-22 March and 30 November-6 December 2009; 29 March-4 April and 22-28 November 2010; 21-27 March and 5-11 December 2011; 5-12 March and 22-28 October 2012; 18-24 March 2013.
4. Broadcasting schedule of Top Channel are seen on 8-15 October 2004; 28 March-8 April and 31 October-6 November 2005; 13-19 March and 30 October-6 November 2006; 19-25 March and 22-30 October 2007; 17-24 March and 17-23 November 2008; 16-22 March and 23-30 November 2009; 29 March-4 April and 22-28 November 2010; 21-27 March and 24-31 October 2011; 5-12 March and 22-28 October 2012; 18-24 March and 21-28 October 2013.