

Original: Spanish

IAB DECLARATION

Without Freedom of Expression there is no Democracy

INTERNATIONAL CONCERN FOR ONGOING INITIATIVES IN COSTA RICA

The International Association of Broadcasting – IAB, observes with surprise and concern that a country like Costa Rica, democratic model to many, historical and strong supporter of Freedom of Expression and example throughout Latin America because of its permanent struggle for civil liberties, is proceeding with initiatives and proposals intended to open the gates to exercise of censorship, state control - direct or indirect – on social communication media and the imposition of limits on the free flow of information, with the endorsement of the government.

The Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights states:

“Freedom of expression in all its forms and manifestations is a fundamental and inalienable right of all individuals. Additionally, it is an indispensable requirement for the very existence of a democratic society.”

“Prior censorship, direct or indirect interference in or pressure exerted upon any expression, opinion or information transmitted through any means of oral, written, artistic, visual or electronic communication must be prohibited by law. Restrictions to the free circulation of ideas and opinions, as well as the arbitrary imposition of information and the imposition of obstacles to the free flow of information violate the right to freedom of expression.”

There are many ways to disguise the attempts to infringe those freedoms, and countless methods used to achieve these absurdities that should be avoided. Freedom of expression is the latter instrument available for citizens to resist undue onslaught of power. This requires that journalists and media should be independent.

The Costa Rican model of broadcasting, of free over-the air reception, built by the Costa Rican society from its permanent democratic, civilian and respect for the law desire, has been devotedly developed in this nation by our member, the National Chamber of Radio - CANARA - and by each one of its members, to whom IAB reiterates its absolute and full support.

The success of Costa Rica has always consisted in ensuring the widest possible participation in the media, taking in consideration the technical parameters imposed by the efficient use of frequencies and transmission channels, arranged to ensure the exercise of fundamental rights of human beings, without precondition for payments or subscriptions of any kind.

IAB is aware of the strength of Costa Rican institutions to withstand such attacks against civil liberties of its citizens, but due to the similarities observed with processes carried out in other Latin American nations, it is necessary to remain vigilant for the evolution of initiatives taking place in that country.

For the first time, in the case of Costa Rica, IAB deems necessary to ask its members and directors the urgent distribution of this declaration.

April 15, 2015

The International Association of Broadcasting - IAB is an organization founded in 1946 that represents over 17.000 private radio and television stations and its goal is the defense of private and free broadcasting as well as the effectiveness of Freedom of Expression and Opinion.