

Abstract:

Focusing on the Czech Republic's current reality, the paper describes basic relations between legal (formal) and other (informal) ways of regulation of advertising. Having covered basic marketing and advertising terminology and legal definitions of essential advertising terms, it further generally describes the principles of both formal and informal regulation of advertising. Formal regulation is represented by European Union rules focusing on general advertising regulation and consumer protection. The description of the Czech Republic's current legal regulation consists in a list of most recent laws in the area of public (constitutional and specific laws) and private (civil and business) law. Moreover, areas such as business ethics, ethics in management, its principles, methods and tools are presented, ethical codices being the focal point here and basis for further analyses in the following parts of the paper. Informal regulation is based on business and professional ethics and further develops the idea of ethical codices when describing the principles of self-regulation as the most important informal regulatory system. The principles of self-regulation of advertising are divided into two groups: theoretical and applied. The latter are based on the rules declared by international self-regulation organizations (i. e. International Chamber of Commerce and European Advertising Standards Alliance). The above mentioned entities are further introduced in terms of their profile, organization, membership and operations. Based on these theoretical groundings, the work presents the Czech Advertising Standards Council as the practical example of self-regulation. Having listed details about the organization and its linkages to international entities, the Council's Code of Advertising is thoroughly analysed. A quantitative analysis of its decision making over the period 2002-2008 follows, succeeded by an evaluation of the Council's self-regulatory activities and efficiency over the same period. The findings are based on the quantitative analysis as well as on the information that had been published by the Council over the past years. An insight in the current marketing and communication trends is included which provides the basis for questioning the Council's self-regulatory role and possibilities in the near future.