[FR] BFM TV warned by ARCOM after misquoting former prime minister

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In a decision adopted on 3 April 2024, the *Autorité de régulation de la communication audiovisuelle et numérique* (the French audiovisual regulator – ARCOM) issued a formal notice to BFM TV, urging it to meet its obligations to exercise honesty and rigour in the presentation and processing of information, and to control its programmes. The warning followed a discussion in the "120 minutes" programme broadcast on 26 November 2023 concerning words spoken by a former prime minister in the "Quotidien" programme broadcast on the same channel three days earlier. During the discussion, people in the studio claimed that the former prime minister had spoken of the domination of Jewish finance over Western societies and, through it, of the control of the media and the world of entertainment. A banner supporting this assertion appeared on the screen throughout the discussion.

In the "Quotidien" programme broadcast on 23 November 2023, the former prime minister had actually said the following: "The third thing is that your report implies how heavily financial domination weighs in the media and the world of art and music because they can't say what they think, quite simply because their contracts would be terminated immediately. It's therefore clear that cultural life is ruled by money in the United States, and unfortunately the same is true in France as well. And it's all deeply regrettable in terms of freedom and the ability to shape public opinion, you clearly have to do it with moderation in mind, thinking of others all the time […]".

According to ARCOM, the words spoken by the presenter and his guest in the "120 minutes" programme on 26 November 2023, along with the accompanying banner, were factually inaccurate, alleging that a former prime minister had made statements that were very serious in a context of high tension linked to the war in the Middle East. The broadcaster had therefore breached its obligation to exercise honesty and rigour in the presentation and processing of information, contravening Article 2-3-7 of its licence agreement and Article 1 of the regulator's decision of 18 April 2018 to which it referred. The words spoken by the programme presenter himself and his guest, along with the inaccurate information contained in the banner that appeared on the screen throughout the discussion also amounted to a failure by the broadcaster to control its programmes, i.e. a breach of Article 2-2-1 of its licence agreement.

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BFM TV was ordered to comply with these obligations in the future.

Decision no. 2024-265 of 3 April 2024 to issue a formal notice to BFM TV, French Official Gazette of 11 April 2024

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