[FR] Arcom imposes two sanctions totalling EUR 100 000 on CNews for discriminatory comments and failure to control airtime

IRIS 2026-3:1/15

Amélie Blocman
Légipresse

In two decisions issued on 5 February 2026, the French audiovisual regulator (*Autorité de Régulation de la Communication Audiovisuelle et Numérique* – Arcom) ruled on two disputed sequences of the programme "*L'Heure des Pros 2 Eté*", broadcast on CNews on 8 and 12 August 2025.

During the programme shown on 12 August 2025, a female columnist made comments associating all Palestinians with the perpetrators of the terrorist attacks of 7 October, describing them as "savages" and "appalling bloodthirsty people", and attributing extremely serious acts to all Palestinians without distinction. These comments, which, although repeated, were neither questioned nor contradicted by anyone present on the set, were deemed likely to encourage viewers to discriminate against Palestinians on the basis of their origin, regardless of the columnist's actual intention, which could not be deduced from the remarks she had made. As a result, the broadcaster had breached the stipulations of its licence of 27 November 2019, under which it must not encourage discriminatory behaviour.

During the same programme, the guest also denounced the presence in Paris airports of a "large number" of baggage handlers "very marked [...] physically by the Muslim religion", and made comments targeting Muslims working as baggage handlers as a whole on account of their religion, accusing them of worrying behaviour that posed a risk to passengers. Such stigmatisation, which was not moderated or challenged in any way by the people present on the set, was also deemed likely to encourage discriminatory behaviour, contrary to the provisions of the channel's licence.

Arcom also noted that, since the disputed comments had not been tempered or moderated by the people present on set, the broadcaster had failed in its obligation to control the airwaves, as stipulated in its licence. In view of all these breaches, a EUR 75 000 fine was imposed on the channel's publisher, pursuant to Articles 42-1 and 42-2 of the Act of 30 September 1986.

In its second decision of the same day, Arcom examined a sequence from the programme "*L'Heure des Pros 2 Eté*" broadcast on 8 August 2025, concerning a

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

decision handed down by the Constitutional Council (*Conseil Constitutionnel*) the previous day. Under the latter decision, Article 1 of the law designed to extend the maximum duration of administrative detention of illegal foreign nationals to 180 or even 210 days had been declared unconstitutional.

During this sequence, a guest criticised the decision and said that "millions of Algerians" "present major risks", since they "can pull out a knife in a metro, a train station, in the street, anywhere, or get into a car and drive into a crowd", thus suggesting that the presence in France of Algerian nationals residing there, targeted as a whole on account of their origin and nationality, posed a major risk to public safety. Such comments were likely to encourage hate speech and discriminatory behaviour. Moreover, nobody present on the set had questioned or contradicted them. Arcom therefore considered that this sequence constituted a breach by the broadcaster of the provisions of Article 15 of the Act of 30 September 1986 on the one hand, and of the stipulations of the channel's licence on the other.

The guest corrected her remarks three days later on a social network and the following day in the press. She also clarified during the "*Punchline Eté*" programme broadcast on CNews the following week that she had meant "thousands" rather than "millions", while confirming her comments in all other respects. In this case, Arcom considered that this correction had no impact on the nature of the breaches committed by the broadcaster. In view of these particular circumstances, a EUR 25 000 fine was imposed on the broadcaster.

Décision n° 2026-51 du 5 février 2026 portant sanction à l'encontre de la Société d'exploitation d'un service d'information (SESI), JORF du 11 février

https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/download/pdf?id=n5SLrBjIMj3967HQK52oKsi7r4krTcTFGBOHLma5N3I=

Decision no. 2026-51 of 5 February 2026 imposing a penalty on the Société d'exploitation d'un service d'information (SESI), OJ of 11 February.

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026