[FR] Council of State validates Arcom's reorganisation of channel numbering

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In 2024, following a call for tenders for the allocation of terrestrial television services, some channels did not have their licences renewed (C8 and NRJ12), a number of new channels were authorised (including T18 and NOVO19) and Canal+ ceased broadcasting on DTT.

Through decision no. 2025-01 of 9 January 2025, the French audiovisual regulator (*Autorité de Régulation de la Communication Audiovisuelle et Numérique* – Arcom) changed the allocation of "logical numbers" to terrestrial television services broadcast in mainland France in order to improve the clarity of the offering for viewers. The companies Jeunesse TV, Paris Première, M6 Génération and Métropole Télévision requested the annulment of this decision on the grounds of abuse of power.

The Council of State (*Conseil d'Etat*) pointed out that, under the second paragraph of Article 3-1 of the Act of 30 September 1986, Arcom "allocates a logical number to terrestrial audiovisual communication services, taking into account the public interest, respect for the pluralism of information and fairness between broadcasters, and may, to this end, create service blocks based on their programming."

By reallocating service numbers, Arcom had sought, in the interests of viewers and broadcasters, to limit number changes for services not directly affected by these developments and to group certain services onto similar numbers due to their programming. For example, it had grouped news channels into a single block.

In addition, the allocation of number 4 to the France 4 channel (instead of the previous number 14) had been intended to ensure that, as the contested decision stated, "for the sake of clarity and in the public interest, the France 2, France 3, France 4 and France 5 services follow each other logically". Contrary to the applicant companies' claims, the provisions of Article 3-1 of the Act of 30 September 1986, which addressed the possibility of creating blocks based on service programming, did not prevent Arcom from basing its decision on the clarity of the offerings for viewers and the coherence and complementarity provided for in Article 2 of the Decree of 23 June 2009 establishing the

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specifications for France Télévisions and its channels when allocating numbers 2 to 5 in this way.

Lastly, the Council of State ruled that the provisions of Article 3-1 of the Act of 30 September 1986 did not, in principle, prevent Arcom, which was responsible for ensuring fairness among broadcasters, from drawing lots to allocate channel numbers. In this case, Arcom had chosen to reserve numbers 18 and 19, which had become vacant, for the two new channels CMI TV, which had subsequently become T18, and OFTV in order to "minimise the number of channel number changes" and "limit the effects of these changes on viewers' habits", and had drawn lots between these two new channels to determine the allocation of numbers 18 and 19. The Council of State ruled that Arcom's decision was not unlawful because it had decided not to make any broader changes to the previously allocated numbers.

The application was therefore dismissed.

Conseil Etat, 25 février2026, n° 502416, Métropole Télévision et a.

http://www.conseil-etat.fr/fr/arianeweb/CE/decision/2026-02-25/502416

Council of State, 25 February 2026, no. 502416, Métropole Télévision et al.

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