

[ES] Spain's new approach to audiovisual content classification

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Spain's new Co-Regulatory Agreement on the Classification of Audiovisual Programmes and Content (*Acuerdo de corregulación para la calificación de programas y contenidos audiovisuales* - code of conduct) was approved in July 2026.

The code of conduct implements Article 98(2) of Spain's General Audiovisual Communication Law (*Ley 13/2022 General de Comunicación Audiovisual* - LGCA) and creates a common framework for the classification of audiovisual content. Although its most obvious objective is the protection of minors, it also reflects a broader change in how audiovisual content is consumed and regulated.

The traditional idea of age rating is simple: a film or programme is either suitable for everyone, or it is not recommended for children under 7, 12, 16 or 18, or is X-rated. The new system retains these familiar categories, but adds another layer by explaining why a particular classification has been given. This is not new in practice, as most major video-on-demand platforms operating in Spain already provide this kind of content information.

Under the code, content descriptors will indicate whether content includes scenes of violence, sex, fear or distress, drugs, discrimination, or imitable behaviour and language. A number alone is no longer considered enough, with parents and viewers now able to understand what kind of content lies behind the rating and make a more informed decision about what to watch.

This is particularly relevant in an on-demand environment. The old model, which was largely built around free television schedules and protected broadcasting hours, becomes much less effective when content can be watched at any time, on multiple devices and increasingly through individual profiles. Information and parental control tools are therefore at least as important as broadcasting restrictions.

The code of conduct also tries to bring some consistency to a system that has not always been easy to navigate.

Spain still has different regulatory frameworks for cinema and audiovisual media services, but the new rules expressly recognise classifications already granted by

the Spanish Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts (*Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales* - ICAA) or the competent regional authority. A film that has already received an official rating does not need to be classified again when it reaches television or an on-demand service.

For series, meanwhile, the general rule is that the whole season receives the classification of its highest-rated episode. This illustrates one of the practical challenges behind any classification system: applying relatively simple labels to increasingly complex catalogues and formats.

Another interesting aspect is the regulatory model itself, which is based on co-regulation rather than pure self-regulation. The audiovisual industry agrees on and applies common rules, while the Spanish competition regulator (*Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia* - CNMC) and the competent regional authorities retain their statutory supervisory and enforcement powers. Users can also challenge both classifications and descriptors through the complaints mechanism established by the code of conduct.

The code of conduct is not simply about putting a 12+ or 16+ symbol on the corner of a screen. It moves towards a system in which platforms and broadcasters provide more meaningful information about content, while giving parents better tools to decide what minors should watch.

Resolución de 26 de agosto de 2026, de la Subsecretaría, por la que se publica el Acuerdo de corregulación para la calificación de programas y contenidos audiovisuales previsto en el artículo 98.2 de la Ley 13/2022, de 7 de julio, General de Comunicación Audiovisual.

https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2026/09/09/pdfs/BOE-A-2026-18871.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Under-Secretariat Resolution of 26 August 2026 publishing the Co-regulatory Agreement on the Classification of Audiovisual Programmes and Content provided for in Article 98(2) of Law 13/2022 of 7 July on General Audiovisual Communication.

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