[FR] Impartiality, ethics and advertising at the heart of amended terms of reference for the public audiovisual sector

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Decree No. 2026-971 of 20 October 2026 amends the terms of reference for France Télévisions, Radio France and France Médias Monde, with a view, in particular, to implementing several recommendations from the inquiry led by Bruno Lasserre concerning impartiality in public service broadcasting.

The terms of reference for the three organisations now include an explicit definition of impartiality, which is described as "an essential condition for public confidence in the public service broadcasting sector". It includes a duty to set an example in terms of transparency and honesty in reporting, as well as respect for the pluralistic expression of different schools of thought and opinions. The decree specifies, however, that this requirement does not preclude each service from having its own editorial line. Finally, impartiality applies in full to news programmes and, in accordance with appropriate arrangements, to other programmes that contribute to them.

Each organisation must draw up and publish an editorial charter setting out the ethical rules applicable to news programmes, establish procedures for handling complaints regarding compliance with this charter, and publish an annual report on the perception of the impartiality of its services.

The decree also gives greater powers to the committees responsible for the integrity, independence and pluralism of news and programmes (*comités relatifs à l'honnêteté, à l'indépendance et au pluralisme de l'information et des programmes* - CHIPIP). The broadcasting organisations must provide these committees with the means and resources – in particular human, administrative and technical resources – necessary for the effective and independent fulfilment of their remit. The committees are also involved in drafting internal codes of ethics and report on their implementation in their annual review.

The committees' remit regarding pluralism is also strengthened. For example, they can rule on compliance with rules on the pluralistic expression of schools of thought and opinion in the most emblematic programmes, assessed over relevant periods. The decree also introduces explicit recognition, within the terms of reference, of ombudsmen whose role is to foster public trust by facilitating

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dialogue between the public and editorial teams.

Beyond this common framework, the decree sets out several obligations specific to Radio France in response to requests for clarification previously made by the French audiovisual regulator (Arcom), particularly regarding the accuracy of information, but also concerning control over programming and respect for human rights. In its opinion, Arcom considers that the new provisions bring Radio France into closer alignment with the framework applicable to other broadcasters, both public and private, on these points.

The decree also consolidates, at a regulatory level, the role of investigative journalism within Radio France's remit.

The advertising regime for public service radio has also been overhauled. The main change is the inclusion, directly within its terms of reference, of an annual cap on advertising and sponsorship revenue. Total revenue from advertising, public service announcements and sponsorship may therefore not exceed EUR 70 million per year. Until now, the revenue cap had been defined in the contract setting out objectives and resources, and only applied to advertising revenue from terrestrial broadcasts. Its inclusion in the terms of reference now enables Arcom to monitor compliance and broadens its scope, notably to include digital advertising revenue. However, advertising can still only be broadcast by France Inter, France Info and ICI. France Culture, France Musique and FIP remain excluded from commercial advertising.

Décret n° 2026-971 du 20 octobre 2026 portant modification des cahiers des charges des sociétés nationales de programme France Télévisions, Radio France et de la société en charge de l'audiovisuel extérieur de la France

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Decree No. 2026-971 of 20 October 2026 amending the terms of reference of the national broadcasting organisations France Télévisions and Radio France, and of the organisation responsible for France's international broadcasting

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