[AT] Violence in the Media Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel

IRIS 1999-4:1/29

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Austria is playing an increasingly prominent role in the protection of children in the European Union. Following the amendment of the "Television Without Frontiers" Directive, which led to the introduction on 1 January 1999 of visual identification of programmes considered unsuitable for young persons (see IRIS 1999-1:9), a symposium on the theme "Violence in the Media" was held on 10 March 1999.

The symposium, attended by experts from Austria and abroad, was organized by the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF), the Federal Ministry of Environment, and Youth and Family. It was divided into four sections, dealing with: violence in society, violence in the media (TV fiction, video, Internet, written press), the portrayal of violence on TV news programmes, and TV violence/programme identification. ORF representatives stated that the ORF was not using the introduction of visual identification of programmes considered unsuitable for young persons as an excuse to drop traditional methods of regulating TV violence. Most of these are in fact voluntary regulations governing areas such as the responsible purchase of programmes, careful monitoring of violence in all programmes, removal of all scenes containing gratuitous violence, care in producing and broadcasting trailers, implementation of age restrictions recommended by the Austrian Youth Film Commission, German Voluntary Film Control Board (FSK) and Voluntary Television Control Board (FSF), and watersheds. Currently, watersheds are at 8.15 p.m. (preceded by programmes suitable for the whole family and after which programmes requiring parental guidance may be shown) and around 10 p.m. (after which programmes which may influence the physical, psychological or moral development of minors may be broadcast).

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