[BE] Flemish Council for Disputes Admonishes VRT because of Discrimination against Catholic Faith

IRIS 2001-1:1/10

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The Vlaamse Geschillenraad voor radio en televisie (Flemish Council for Disputes in Radio and Television) for the second time held that the Flemish public broadcasting organisation (VRT) breached its obligation under the decreten betreffende de radio-omroep en de televisie (Flemish Broadcasting Act). This time, the Council found that a radio programme had ridiculed in a discriminatory way the essentials of Christian belief, namely the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ. The Council of Disputes recognised the existence of the freedom of expression for broadcasters to criticise and to impart ideas that can offend, shock or disturb a certain group in society. However, according to the Council of Disputes, certain limits should not be overstepped and the ridiculing of a certain belief should not have a discriminatory character. Without specifying precisely why the VRT-programme overstepped certain limits or why it was discriminatory, the Flemish Council for Disputes declared the complaint about the radio programme admissible and well-founded. The public broadcasting organisation VRT has been admonished by the Council. This is the second time that the ridiculing of Christian worship by VRT has led to a warning by the Council of Disputes (see IRIS 1999-1: 13).

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Flemish Council for Disputes in Radio and Television, Decision 006/2000, 4 October 2000, in the case of M. De Bruyn v. VRT

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