[BE] RTBF Required to Resume Broadcasting of an Advertising Spot

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François Jongen
Catholic University of Louvain, Avocat (lawyer)

Public opinion in Belgium has been ruffled recently by the latest advertising spot for the temporary employment company Adecco. This shows a rather unattractive and overweight employer in his fifties doing a striptease in front of a girl, ending up wearing nothing but a contract, which she then signs. Although private television channels were continuing to broadcast the spot regularly, RTBF had withdrawn it in December after there had been considerable indignant reaction on the part of viewers to its first showing.

Adecco was not pleased with this, and had applied to the district court of Brussels to require RTBF to resume broadcasting of the spot. It came as a surprise to many that the court found in favour of the advertiser, rejecting all the arguments put forward by RTBF. Upholding a "right to be humorous", the judge found specifically that the advertisement was neither immoral nor encouraged sexual harassment in the workplace. RTBF has appealed against the order.

Ordonnance du président du tribunal de première instance de Bruxelles siégeant en référé, 25 janvier 2001, 01/39/C

Order by the presiding judge of the district court of Brussels sitting in urgent matters, 25 January 2001, 01/39/C

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