[ES] Catalonia Audiovisual Council Recommendations for Coverage of Tragic Events

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In February 2001, the Catalan audiovisual regulatory authority, the Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya (Catalonia Audiovisual Council, CAC), issued a set of basic guidelines for TV broadcasters when covering tragic events. The guidelines are addressed to authorities, audiovisual corporations and professionals in the field of audiovisual information.

The Recommendations stress that public authorities should give assistance to the media by ensuring that they are treated in a fair manner. Public authorities should also avoid overacting and seeking prominence while at the scene of an accident or tragic event.

The Recommendations state that audiovisual corporations should guarantee suitable training, including training of a specialised nature, for those persons whose professional duties require them to report on tragic events. According to the Recommendations, audiovisual corporations should provide information about a catastrophe only when this may help to check the extent of its tragic effects.

Audiovisual information professionals, for their part, should respect the right to privacy of victims of tragedies. They should try to avoid turning the coverage of catastrophes into a mere spectacle; they should warn viewers before the broadcast of images that may shock them and they should clearly distinguish between the live coverage of a tragic event and its documentary reconstruction or recreation by means of dramatised fiction. Great care should be taken when making statements, and lists of victims should not be reported before they become official. These professionals should try to make sure that the relatives are the first to be informed about the condition or fate of victims before this information is made public. The attribution of blame or guilt should also be avoided unless there are good reasons for doing so.

These guidelines are drawn from the results of a conference organised by the CAC on this issue (further to a dramatic accident which took place in Catalonia last summer), and from an open forum on the Internet.

Recomendaciones del Consejo Audiovisual de Cataluña sobre el tratamiento informativo de las tragedias personales, de febrero de 2001

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Recommendations from the Catalan Audiovisual Council about the Informative Treatment of Personal Tragedies, February 2001

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