[FR] Real TV under the Vigilant Eye of the CSA

IRIS 2001-5:1/9

Amélie Blocman
Légipresse

The concept of the now famous television programme "Big Brother", which first appeared in the Netherlands in September 1999 and has since spawned other programmes in both the United States and Europe, has been taken up in France by the terrestrially-broadcast Hertzian channel M6, which has just launched the programme "Loft Story". This first broadcast by Real TV in France proposes to following in real time the lives of 11 single people (6 young men and 5 young women) who have agree to being filmed twenty-four hours a day for seventy days, corresponding to a period of flat-sharing in a loft. The highlights of each day are broadcast on M6 daily in the early evening, while a channel in the TPS satellite package and an Internet site show "Loft Story" twentyfour hours a day.

The Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel (the audiovisual regulatory body - CSA) did not delay in making its reactions known. In a communiqué on 2 May, the CSA made a number of ethical recommendations to the channel, appealing to its management to "continue to show the greatest possible vigilance in order to avoid any faux pas which could infringe respect for the dignity of the human being". The CSA also asked M6 to make sure it would "avoid showing an excessive consumption of tobacco and alcohol, and respect the statutory and regulatory provisions in force". Going one step further, the CSA also stated its "concern that an approved terrestrially-broadcast channel could act as a loss leader for diversifications of the same programme on other supports for which a charge was made" and called on M6 to "put an end to the promotion of the broadcast of "Loft Story" on a satellite programme and an Internet site". The CSA has not, however, commented on the content of the programme accessible twenty-four hours a day on the TPS satellite package, as it has no responsibility in respect of this type of programme. The decrees implementing the Act of 1 August 2000, which established a system of prior approval for this type of broadcast, have still not been published. The same applied to the Internet site, as the CSA has no responsibility in this area. Although it has no formal regulatory power, this communiqué should no doubt be taken into account by the M6 channel, which is in fact currently renegotiating the renewal of its approval by the CSA for a further five-year period.

Communiqué n° 448 du CSA du 2 mai 2001

Communiqué no. 448 by the CSA, 2 May 2001

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