[PT] Television Operators Sign Agreement on Human Dignity

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Under the aegis of the Alta Autoridade para a Comunicação Social (the Authority for the Media), the Portuguese national broadcasting operators (RadioTelevisão Portuguesa, Sociedade Independente de Comunicação and Televisão Independente) have signed a self-regulatory protocol in order to safeguard human dignity in television programming. The document had been discussed for quite some time, but it was only on 18 September 2001 that the presidents of all of the television companies' boards agreed to sign it.

In the first clause of the agreement (which has a total of seven clauses), the operators state that they shall comply with the Television Law (nº31-A/98 of 14 July) and in particular Article 21 regarding the limits to programming freedom. Other clauses confirm the intention of television operators to comply with the legislation in terms of bad language, violence and sex.

The perceived relevance of the agreement, which does not go any further than the existing Television Law, is related to the fact that operators have never complied with the legislation and the Portuguese authorities have never had the will or the means to implement it. The High Authority for the Media has been under pressure to act in order to ensure human dignity in programming, particularly since the Big Brother reality-show started broadcasting in Portugal on 3 September 2000.

Comunicado da Alta Autoridade para a Comunicação Social de 18 de Setembro de 2001 / Protocolo relativo às regras para a salvaguarda da dignidade da pessoa humana na programação televisiva

http://www.aacs.pt/bd/Comunicados/20010918.htm

Statement of the High Authority for the Media of 18 September

Lei da Televisão, Lei nº 31-A/98 de 14 de Julho

Television Act nº 31-A/98 of 14 July 1998

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