[FR] New Agreement for TF1

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The company Télévision française 1 (TF1) signed a new agreement with the Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel (French audiovisual regulatory authority - CSA) on 8 October. The agreement - which will come into force on 1 January 2002 and be valid for five years - has been reached at the end of much work and rounds of negotiations and follows on from the renewal of TF1's authorisation last April without calling for applications from any other parties. The new agreement is much more detailed, and has taken into account the wishes expressed by the CSA, particularly regarding ethical practice, and those of TF1, mainly regarding changes to programming.

The main changes in the agreement appear mainly in the wording of the channel's ethical obligations. A number of new features have been taken into account - the appearance of "reality television" firstly, with the demand that the participation of non-professionals in games or studio programmes or entertainment shows should not carry any requirement for them to waive their fundamental rights (rights regarding the use of their image or protecting their privacy). Article 11 of the new agreement in particular was directly inspired by the problems encountered when things got out of hand with the first programme of this kind (Loft Story), broadcast last spring on M6.

Discussion on the presumption of innocence, followed by the corresponding Act of 15 June 2000, also had an effect on the agreement; Article 8 of which now requires the channel to abide scrupulously by the spirit of the text.

In more general terms, the new agreement emphasises the demand for political and general information and news to be independent of the company's shareholders and pays particular attention to the processing of images, with any modifications being clearly indicated and advance warning being given when particularly tragic scenes are to be broadcast.

There has also been a considerable change in the provisions concerning programmes for children and young people. TF1's obvious desire to draw a clearer line between advertising and actual sponsorship of its programmes is reflected in Articles 45 and 46. The obligations of production and distribution have been maintained; the latter may be re-considered when terrestrially-broadcast digital television is introduced.

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The other new features of the new agreement cover advertising on the air for TF1's own tie-in products or for the group's activities (production of video cassettes, satellite package, etc). Article 25 requires moderation of tone and measure in presenting these activities, sticking to a strictly informative presentation.

Lastly, as far as the main points of the new agreement are concerned, there are stricter obligations to inform the CSA of any change in its shareholders and to provide financial information on the group in general.

Convention du 8 octobre 2001 entre le CSA et la société Télévision française 1

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