[FR] CSA Calls for a Stop to Pornographic Programmes on Television

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By virtue of Article 15 of the Act of 30 September 1986, as amended, "the Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel (the audiovisual regulatory body - CSA) shall ensure the protection of children and young people and respect for human dignity in the programmes made available to the public by audiovisual communication services". In doing so, "it shall ensure that programmes likely to be harmful to the physical, mental or moral development of minors shall not be made available to the public by a sound or television broadcasting service, except where there is assurance, by the choice of the time the programme is broadcast or by using any appropriate technical process, that minors are not normally likely to hear or to see them". In conjunction with the terrestrially-broadcast, cable and satellite channels, the CSA decided on a classification system of programmes into various categories, each indicated by a symbol; some of the categories carry restrictions as to the time of day when they may be shown. The most restricted category is category V, which covers "cinematographic works that may not be shown to young people under the age of 18, and programmes suitable only for an informed, adult public which, more particularly where they are obscene, or are likely to be harmful to the physical, mental or moral development of young people under the age of 18." Since its concession was granted in 1984, Canal + has been the only encrypted terrestrially-broadcast channel authorised to broadcast pornographic programmes, and only then between midnight and five o'clock in the morning. On 2 July, having noted a substantial increase in the number of broadcasts in category V (more than 100 broadcasts of X-rated films each month on Canal + and on several cable and satellite channels, not including pay-per-view services) and in the light of recent audience figures indicating that a not inconsiderable number of minors are exposed to them, the CSA recommended that pornographic broadcasts on French television should stop. It called on the public authorities to transpose Article 22 of the Television Without Frontiers Directive into French law so that Article 15 of the 1986 Act would specifically ban "programmes including scenes of pornography or gratuitous violence". On 24 July, a Member of Parliament, Christine Boutin, tabled a bill on this.

The CSA is also considering changing the symbols used, to make them clearer and more legible. New pictograms, based on a classification by age rather than the present shapes and colours, have been presented to the national channels and associations concerned with the protection of young people, and they, like viewers, have been asked for their reactions to the new proposals. The National

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Union of Family Associations (UNAF) has already written to all Members of Parliament asking for their active support in implementing these two CSA resolutions.

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