[FR] CSA Publishes its Balance Sheet for 2001 of Cable and Satellite Channels

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At its plenary meetings on 23 July and 10 September 2002, the Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel (the audiovisual regulatory body - CSA) examined the balance sheet of the authorised French-language services distributed by cable and satellite. Traditionally, this balance sheet is based on two complementary approaches - firstly the monitoring and observation of programmes by the CSA, and secondly a declaration scheme based on the undertaking given by each service to submit an annual report on the conditions for carrying out its obligations. The report must include all the figures for programmes and more particularly a statement of the audiovisual and cinematographic works broadcast.

The study carried out by the CSA indicates that the sector of authorised theme channels broadcast by cable and satellite is growing, albeit more slowly than in the past, carried mainly by a small number of major theme channels and a small number of new channels. This sector has seen growth in the order of 11% compared with the previous year, with a turnover amounting to EUR 848.7 million, more than half of which was generated by the four theme channels (cinema, sport, youth and fiction). As of 31 December 2001, the number of households subscribing to pay television on cable and satellite (excluding Canal + broadcast terrestrially) exceeded five million, corresponding to an increase of 11% compared with 2000.

The CSA noted that respect for the basic ethical principles (pluralism, protection of children and young persons) and for the rules concerning advertising and sponsorship were on the whole satisfactory in 2001. Respect for obligations concerning the broadcasting of audiovisual and cinematographic works remains a subject for - sometimes serious - concern, although the report does note an encouraging trend in the right direction. In examining the evolution of the disparities between the percentages required and those achieved, the CSA noted that the services took account of the warnings, formal notices to take action and notices concerning the instigation of sanctions procedures that it had sent to them. It nevertheless carried out sanctions procedures against eight services for failure to respect the quotas for broadcasting cinematographic and/or audiovisual works after first issuing formal notices. It also sent formal notices to a number of services, mainly concerning respect for these quotas, the communication of balance sheets and the right of undertakings to acquire broadcasting rights for

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cinematographic works.

Lastly, the CSA carried out the sanction procedures it had notified in November 2001. Eight of these procedures concerned a failure to respect obligations regarding quotas for European or French-language audiovisual works, and resulted in fines of between EUR 10 000 and 150 000. Ten sanction procedures concerned failure to respect obligations regarding quotas for European or French-language cinematographic works. The CSA called on most of the services concerned to decide on a period of seven consecutive days before the end of 2002 during which they would only broadcast European and/or French-language cinematographic works.

Lastly, concerning certain services, the CSA has fixed at EUR 25 000 the fine for failing to provide information on an annual basis for undertakings to acquire broadcasting rights for European and French-language cinematographic works.

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